HIDEYUKI KIKUCHI'S

Vampire Hunter D

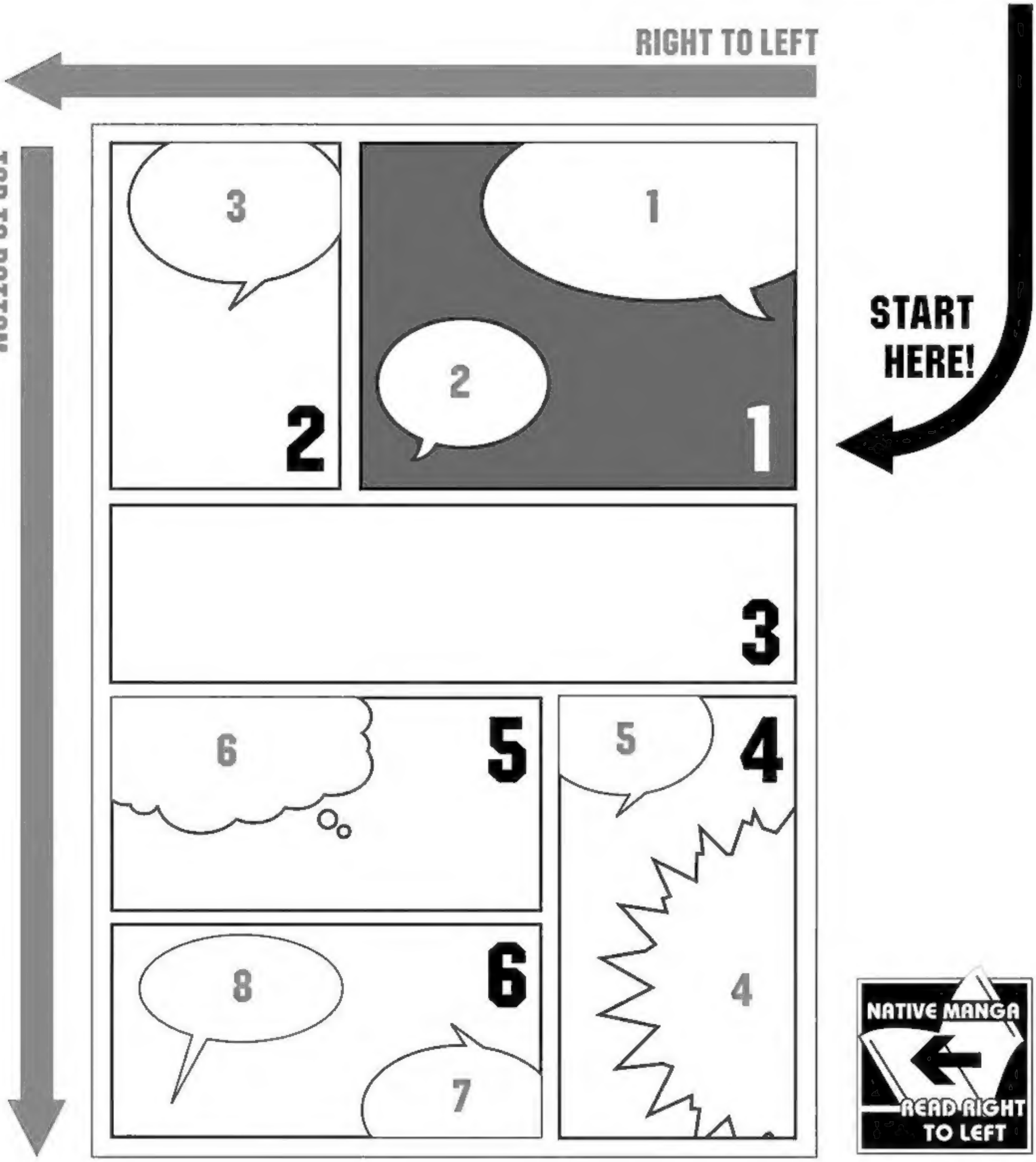
6

ADAPTED AND ILLUSTRATED BY SAIKO TAKAKI

DMP DIGITAL MANGA PUBLISHING™

THIS GRAPHIC NOVEL IS READ IN ITS NATIVE FORMAT

READ EACH PANEL FROM RIGHT TO LEFT, TOP TO BOTTOM SEE HOW IT'S DONE BELOW!



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SAIKO TAKAKI

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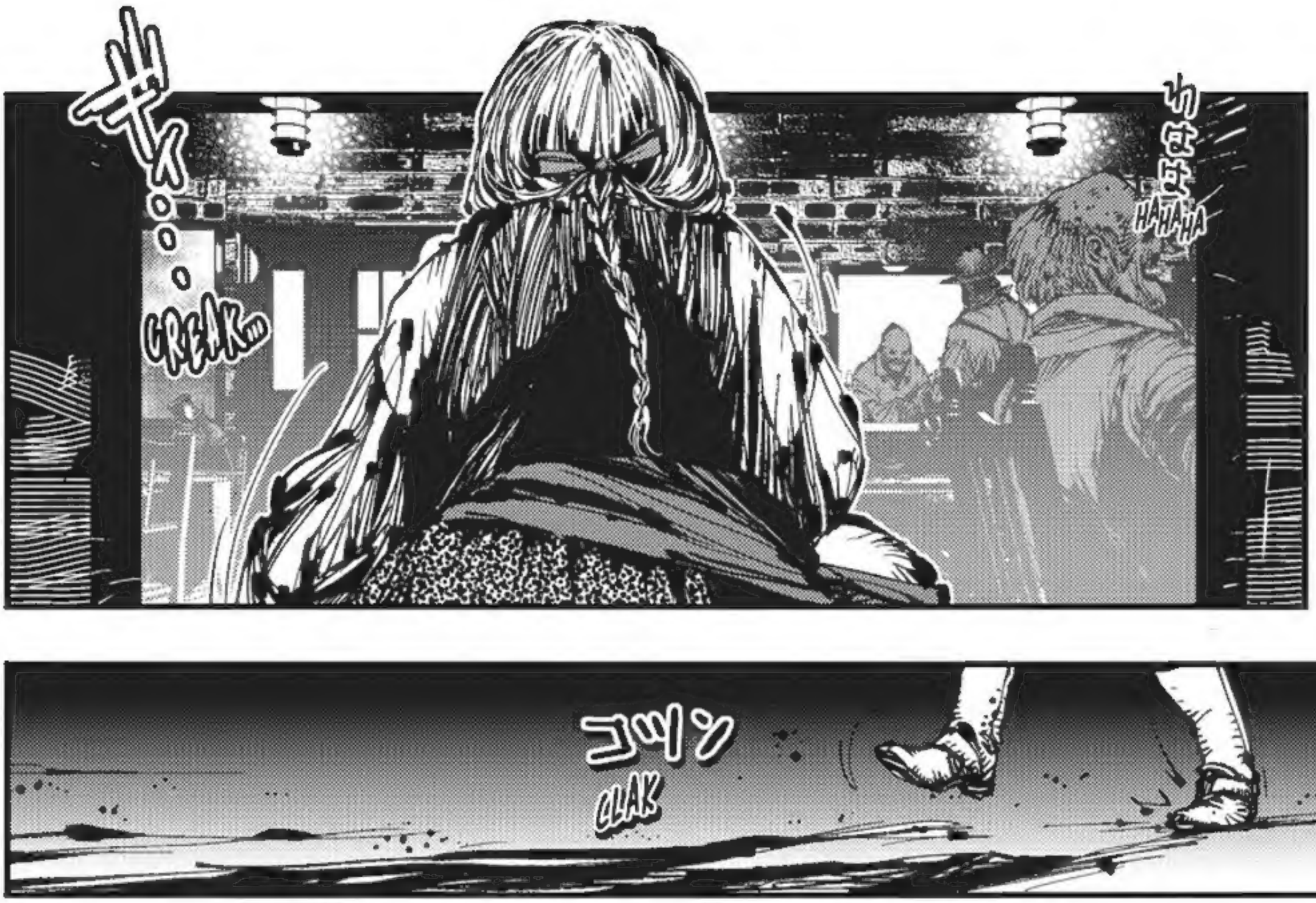

ギィ…
CREAK…
いはは
HAHAHA

コツン
CLAK

コツン
CLAK
コツン
CLAK
コツン
CLAK

YOUR MISTAKE, CLAY.

CHRSH

-KID.

WE DON'T TAKE KINDLY TO FOLKS WITH NO MANNERS ...

TOO BAD, SONNY.

I JUST HAPPEN TO *HATE* BEING IGNORED.

OH-HO!

SMRK...

TH WHRK!

WELL, I'LL BE!

ANYONE CAN DISGUISE A FACE, BUT DISGUISE THE SOUND OF AGED FOOTSTEPS? THAT'S RARE!

WHAT'S YOUR BUSINESS WITH US?

MURMUR...

MURMUR

MURMUR

THAT OLD LADY'S LOOKING TO START A FIGHT WITH BINGO AND CLAY, THE BULLOW BROTHERS!

AND I WANT YOU TWO TO COME WITH ME.

I'M HEADING ACROSS THE DESERT TO THE INNER FRONTIER TOMORROW.

YOU MAY BE THE BIGGEST HOTSHOTS IN THE OUTER FRONTIER, BUT THAT DON'T MEAN YOU SHOULDN'T STILL SHOW PROPER RESPECT TO YOUR ELDERS. DON'T YOU AGREE?

AS SUCH, I'M NOT ABLE TO GREET YOU WITH THE PROPER RESPECT ...

YOU'LL HAVE TO PARDON ME, MA'AM, BUT I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF SLEEP.

NO, SHE'S NOT EXACTLY UNKNOWN.

HEY, BRO - THIS OLD HAG WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WANTS US TO ACCOMPANY HER ON A TRIP ACROSS THE DESERT.

YOU'D BE ESCORTING ME AND ONE OTHER PERSON.

SO WHAT'S YOUR ANSWER GONNA BE? I'LL PAY HAND-SOMELY.

...GRANNY VIPER, "THE PEOPLE FINDER."

EH, I COULDN'T CARE LESS ABOUT GREETINGS.

SORRY, BUT YOU'RE COMING WITH ME, ***WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT.***

HAR

WHIP!

.....

SO YOU REALLY DON'T WANT TO DO IT, EH?

WE'RE WAITING FOR SOME-ONE.

!!!

ZIP

OOF!

BAM!

FWOOOSHHHH

CLAK!

CLAK!

CLAK!

CLAK!

ARE YOU... MR. D?

THERE SHOULD BE SOMEONE HERE BY THE NAME OF THORNTON.

I DON'T BELIEVE WE'VE MET.

HE'S IN THE BACK...

THIS HERE IS MY YOUNGER BROTHER, CLAY.

BIG GRIN

BINGO BULLOW'S THE NAME.

TUNK

YOU MAY HAVE HEARD OF US.

I'D NEVER HAVE GUESSED THERE WAS A MAN ALIVE WHO'D TURN HIS BACK ON AN INVITE FROM BINGO BULLOW!

OH-HO!

THIS IS A SUR-PRISE!

HYAHAHA!

CLAK!

CLAK!

CREAK...

IT'S AN HONOR TO MEET THE GREATEST VAMPIRE HUNTER ON THE FRONTIER.

I AM THORNTON -

YOU'RE RIGHT ON TIME...

...VAMPIRE HUNTER D.

THE MAN WHO SENT YOU THE LETTER.

I LIKE HIM!

HI HI HI HI HI HI HI HI HI

I LIKE HIS STYLE! INDEED, I DO!

I WOULD LIKE YOU TO CROSS THE DESERT.

-BE-CAUSE THAT...

...IS THE REQUEST OF A CERTAIN INDIVIDUAL IN WHOM YOU HAVE GREAT INTEREST.

KNOCK コン

KNOCK コン

ヤイ

BEG PARDON -

I WAS GONNA HIRE THOSE TWO AT FIRST, BUT NOW I'VE CHANGED MY MIND.

I CHOOSE YOU INSTEAD!

I MEAN, WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT A MAN EXISTED THAT DARED COMPLETELY SNUB THE BULLOW BROTHERS?

NOW, I'D HEARD OF YOU, BUT I NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D BE THIS AMAZING!

'COURSE YOU'RE HAND-SOME, TOO.

WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH ME?

Ah!

.....

GIVEN THE SIZE OF THE DESERT, MAKING IT ACROSS IN FOUR DAYS IS GONNA BE A CLOSE CALL.

THAT'S WHY I DEFINITELY NEED SOME HEAVY-DUTY BACKUP FOR THIS.

WE COULD GO AROUND, BUT THAT'D TAKE AT LEAST A WEEK.

I NEED TO GET THERE WITHIN FOUR DAYS' TIME - THAT'S INCLUDING TOMORROW - OR ELSE WE'RE OUT OF LUCK.

I WANT YOU TO COME WITH ME -

TO THE TOWN OF BARNABAS, ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DESERT.

I PROMISE THERE'LL BE A NICE CHUNK OF CHANGE IN IT FOR YOU...

NO.

ARE YOU TRYING TO KILL ME? I'M OVER A HUNDRED, YOU KNOW!

NO, DON'T!

GRRRR...

ROAAARRR...

LEAVE.

EEP!

W... WHY NOT?

WHAT IF I HAVE A HEART ATTACK OR SOMETHING?

HUH

ROAAARRRR...

STOP OR THIS CHILD - THIS GIRL - DIES, TOO!

I SAID STOP IT!

GRIP!

OH...

FLY

FLY

PLEASE, STOP!

FLY

SHE WAS ONE OF THE HIDDEN!

THIS GIRL'S NAME IS TAE -

WHAT'S MORE, IT WAS THE NOBILITY WHO TOOK HER!

SWOON...

MY NICKNAME'S "VIPER".

I'M A PEOPLE FINDER. I SPECIALIZE IN FINDING CHILDREN WHO'VE BEEN SPIRITED AWAY - I FIND THE HIDDEN.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT IS I DO?

DID YOU SAY "THE NOBILITY"?

SHE WAS TAKEN AT THE AGE OF TEN, AND HELD FOR EIGHT YEARS IN THE CASTLE OF THE NOBILITY.

I NEARLY KILLED MYSELF GETTING HER OUT OF CASTLE GRADINIA.

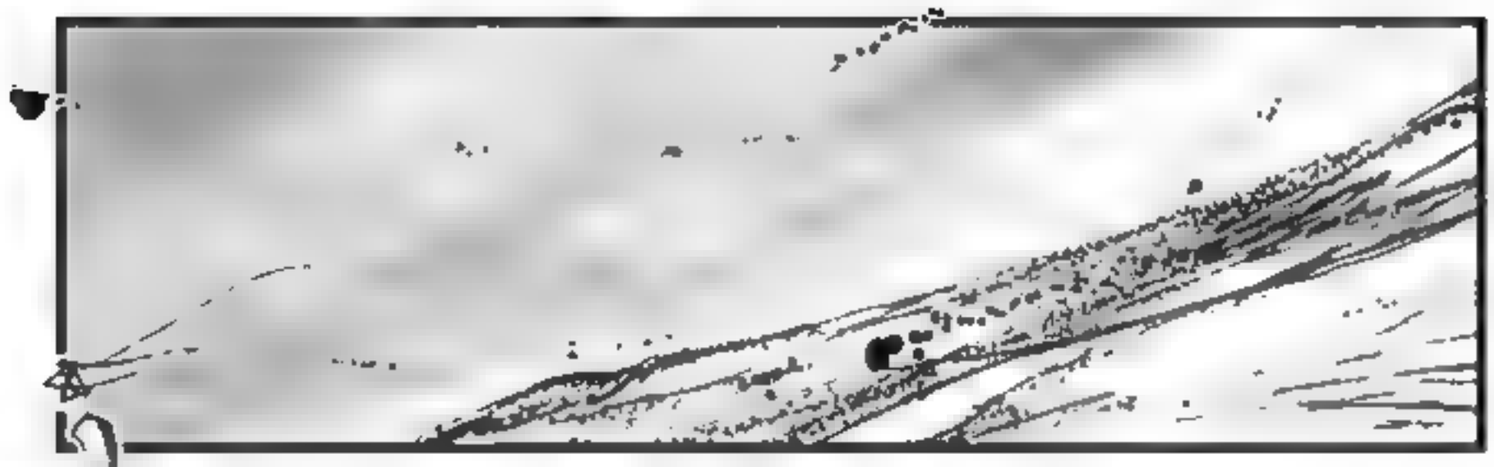
THIS GIRL IS A BONA FIDE HIDDEN ONE, SPIRITED AWAY BY THE NOBILITY.

THIS NOBLE - WHAT WAS HIS NAME?

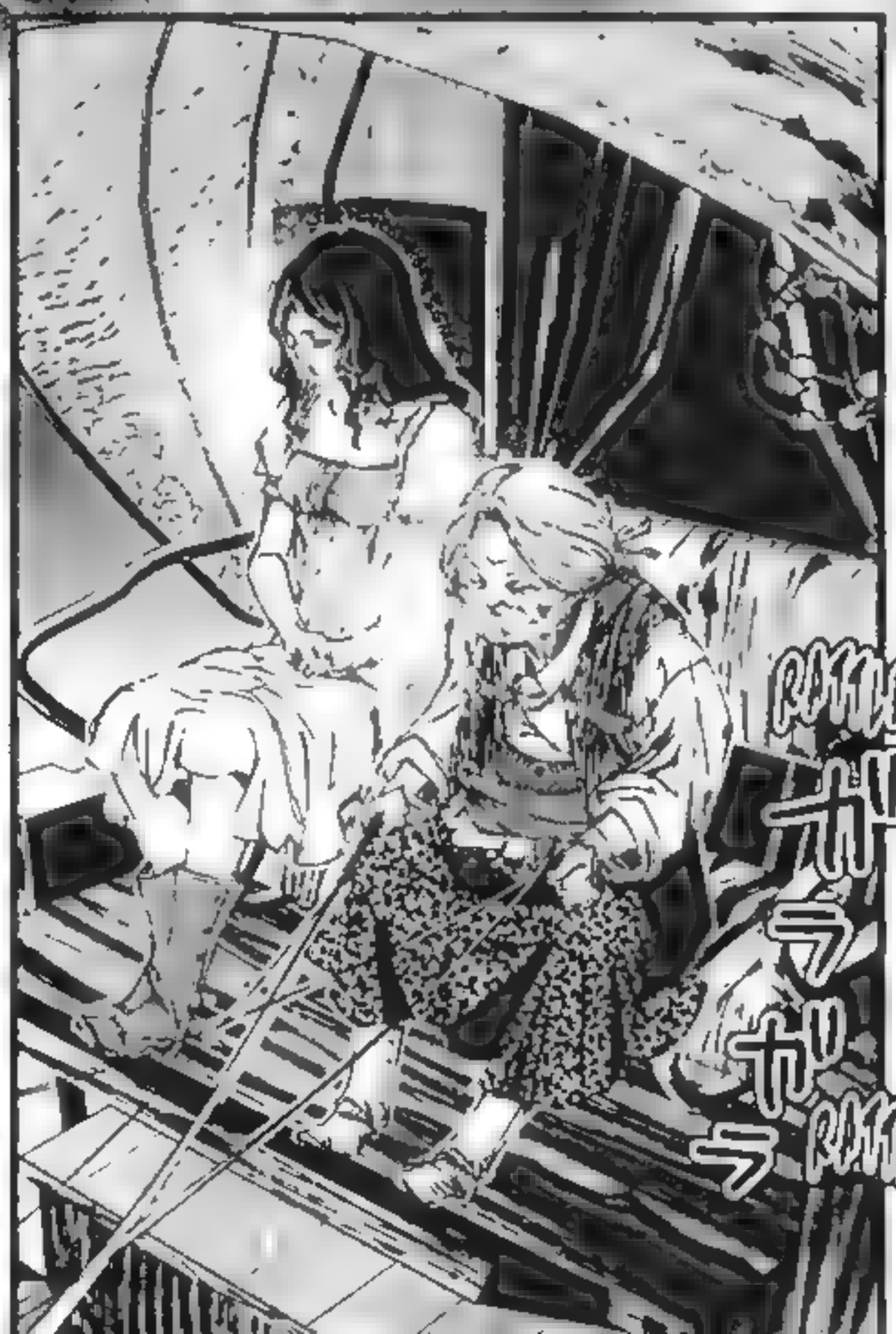
GO ON NOW - ANSWER THE MAN.

...

LEAVE.



JAK


RAWR
RAWR

THE DESERT THAT DIVIDES THE INNER AND OUTER FRONTIER IS KNOWN AS "THE DESERT OF NO RETURN." AND IS GREATLY FEARED.

THE ENDLESS STRETCH OF GOLDEN SAND - THE LEADEN SKY. NO RAY OF SUN IS ABLE TO PIERCE -

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR DEAL IS -

BUT IF YOU'RE CROSSING THE DESERT, THE ONLY POSSIBLE DESTINATION IS BAR-NABAS...

...WHICH HAPPENS TO BE EXACTLY WHERE WE'RE GOING, TOO.

RATTLE RATTLE

SO YOU MAY NOT WANT TO COME WITH US...

...BUT YOU CAN'T STOP US FROM COMING WITH *YOU!*

NONE WHO EVER CROSSED THIS DESERT CAME BACK TO TELL THE TALE

I WOULDN'T WANT TO LOSE SUCH A VALUABLE ESCORT AS YOU!

BUT IF YOU GUYS ARE GONNA FIGHT, AT LEAST WAIT UNTIL AFTER THIS TRIP IS OVER.

THEIR BEEF IS PROBABLY WITH YOU.

THOSE TWO ARE FOLLOWING US.

...

BEEN ACROSS THIS DESERT BEFORE, HAVE YOU?

WHAT? IS SOME-THING COMING ?

LONG AGO, I READ THE NOTES OF SOMEONE WHO MADE IT HALFWAY.

HUH? DID YOU SAY SOME-THING?

GET READY.

OH, SO WE'RE SUDDENLY HER OFFICIAL ESCORT? I DON'T REMEMBER AGREEING TO *THAT.*

RATTLE

THAT'S MORE THAN 5,000 KILOMETERS FROM HERE!

...I SAW ONLY THE BLEACHED BONE OF HIS ARM STICKING OUT FROM BETWEEN THE ROCKS, CLUTCHING A NOTE.

WHEN I FOUND HIM AMONG THE MISHGAULT STONE STACKS...

HOW INTER-ESTING.

HMM, I SEE... SO THAT'S HOW IT IS.

THAT'S WHERE HE MET HIS END, EH?

BUT YOU WENT THERE, TOO, RIGHT?

KI-H-!
THROB!

KI-H-!
THROB

TAE, GET INSIDE.

SOME KIND OF LIVING CRITTER... FIRST TIME I'VE EVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT.

THUD

PLOP

WHIP

THUD

THUD

SO WHAT ARE THESE THINGS ANYWAY ?

I DON'T KNOW.

LOOKS LIKE THE BULLOW BROTHERS ARE TAKEN ABACK, TOO!

HII

KSHAK!

HO HO HO!

THERE WAS NOTHING ABOUT THEM IN THE NOTES.

BUT YOU WARNED US THAT THESE THINGS WERE COMING!

WHAT ?!

I'M GONNA MAKE A BREAK FOR IT!

UGH, THESE CREEPY THINGS!

KRAK!

THEOO!

THEN THESE ARE SOME-THING NEW?!

KRAK KRAK KRAK

DUKKA DUKKA DUKKA

THOO!

KTK!
GLANCE
GRIN
KTK! KTK!
BATTLE
RATTLE
DUKKA
DUKKA
DUKKA
?
TRY SHOOT-ING ONE.
DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THEY'RE COMING AFTER US.
...BUT MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE THEY JUST CAN'T MOVE VERY FAST.
CHK 'Y
OH?
THOSE TWO ARE COMING, TOO.
I'LL WAIT.

POP!

!

HUH?

SHOOT NOW.

BOOM!!

YOU'RE ONE SCARY CHARACTER ALL RIGHT.

SPLAT!

DUKKA

DUKKA

WHSH

WE'RE NOT EVEN FIVE KILOMETERS OUT OF TOWN YET!

WHAT THE HELL WERE THOSE THINGS ?

ZSH...

HH

LUCKY IT MISSED YOU, EH?

BEAM

HEY! YOU LOUSY HAG!

LOOK WHAT YOU DID TO MY PRECIOUS HAT!

THAT WAS A DAMN FOOL THING YOU DID!

BUT HANDSOME OVER THERE IS THE ONE WHO TOLD ME TO SHOOT.

I WAS AFRAID HE'D CUT ME DOWN IF I DIDN'T DO AS HE SAID!

LOOKS LIKE YOU DIDN'T GET ANY OF THEIR CONTENTS ON YOU.

IS THAT TRUE?

WELL, TOO BAD. GETTING SPLATTERED BY THOSE THINGS WOULD BE A DISHONOR TO THE BULLOW BROTHERS' NAME!

I SEE... SO THAT WAS YOUR PLAN.

BULL-SHIT!

INS-TINCT.

BUT NOW WE HAVE NO MEANS OF DEALING WITH THEM WHEN THEY NEXT APPEAR.

BESIDES, EVEN IF YOU HAD GOTTEN SOME ON YOU, I DOUBT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN LIFE THREATENING.

HOW WOULD YOU KNOW THAT?!

GIVE IT A REST, CLAY.

WE ALL SURVIVED, SO WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

NOW, NOW - SETTLE DOWN.

LET'S NOT QUARREL AMONGST PARTY MEMBERS.

IT'S THE INSTINCT OF THE GREAT HUNTER D.

YOU SHOULD'VE GOTTEN DOUSED.

STOP IT, BRO - NOT YOU, TOO?!

GRIN!

GRIN!

GRIN!

WHY, FROM THE MOMENT YOU LEFT TOWN!

SINCE WHEN DID WE BECOME PART OF YOUR PARTY?

FLUTTER

FLUTTER

FLUTTER

...TRAVELING TOGETHER WILL BE MUCH MORE CONVENIENT.

I THINK, IN THIS CASE ...

?!

BWOOOH!

BRO!

YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY: IT'S BEST TO TRAVEL IN NUMBERS -

WHAT IN BLAZES ARE THESE?

BUTTER-FLIES?!

SLASH

ROAAARRR

TASTE THE FURY OF THIS FLAME-THROWER, A SPECIALTY WEAPON DIRECT FROM THE CAPITAL!

COME AND GET SOME!

HOW DO YOU LIKE THAT?!

BWOSH

BWOSH

BWOSH

CRAP!

NO MATTER HOW MANY WE FIGHT OFF, THEY JUST KEEP COMING!

GOD-DAMN BUGS!

BRO?

CHOMP

DAMMIT, I'VE HAD ENOUGH!

WOOSH!!

PLUNG

YOU! STAY INSIDE!

BOOM

PLUNG

WHAT IS THAT STRANGE WEAPON?

GLOOOO

GRIN

W-HOOOSH

W-WHAT'S GOING ON?!

ROAAARRRRRR

RUN!

IT'S A TORNADO!

DO SOME-THING, D!

OR WE'LL GET SUCKED UP IN IT!

ROAAAARRRR...

ROAR...

ROAAR...

...WHERE AM I...?

...WHERE IS EVERY-ONE...?

!!

WHAT DID I DO TO DESERVE THIS...

OWW...

EEEEK!

CRAP... WHAT IS THIS PLACE?

BRO! WHERE ARE YOU?

...

WHOOSH

DASH

!

URRGH...

HO

WHAT'S UP WITH HIM?

HOW... HOW DID YOU ALL GET HERE?

HEY - WHO ARE YOU?

A TRIP THROUGH THE SKY, COURTESY OF THAT STUPID TORNADO.

SLUMP

WE'RE NEVER GOING TO GET OUT OF HERE...

URRGH...

YOU... TOO?

I KNEW IT... THAT MEANS WE'RE -

HM?

WHAT?

THUD

D! SO YOU'RE SAFE!

WHAT THE -...

WHERE'VE YOU BEEN THIS WHOLE TIME...

LET'S BRING HIM WITH US AND ASK HIM.

THIS MAN MIGHT KNOW SOME-THING.

OH, I'M SO GLAD.

MY NAME IS LANCE.

I CAME TO THIS DESERT FIVE YEARS AGO WITH MY COMPANIONS, IN ORDER TO CONDUCT EXPERIMENTS ON A NEW STRAIN OF SEED THAT WOULD GROW EVEN IN THE COLDEST ENVIRONMENT, WITHOUT ANY WATER.

I WAS PART OF A FARMING GROUP IN THE NORTHERN FRONTIER, INVOLVED IN THE EFFORT TO IMPROVE CROPS.

BUT FOR SOME REASON, I ALONE WAS SPARED, AND SINCE THEN HAVE BEEN LIVING AMONG THE BANDITS AS ONE OF THEM.

WE WERE CAUGHT IN A SANDSTORM AND ATTACKED BY BANDITS IN THE NIGHT. MY COMPANIONS WERE ALL SLAUGHTERED...

BUT AS SOON AS WE ARRIVED...

WHAT CHANCE DID I HAVE?

NO BLADE, NO BULLET HARMS THEM - EVEN IF IT'S A DIRECT HIT.

THE BANDITS, AS IT TURNS OUT, ARE IMMORTAL...

I HAD NO OTHER CHOICE.

IM-MORTAL?

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT ALL THIS, D?

IT'S PROB-ABLY TRUE.

IT WAS MEN-TIONED IN THE NOTES, TOO.

WHAT'S THIS ABOUT NOTES?

YOU AN EXPERT ON THIS DESERT?

WHY DON'T YOU TELL US WHAT *ELSE* IS IN STORE, THEN?

?

HEY! QUIT HOLDING OUT!

GONNA KEEP THE INFO ALL TO YOUR-SELF?

-A MOVING FOREST.

THAT'S ALL.

.....

THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES ONLY WITNESSED ITS MOVEMENTS FROM AFAR, AND DID NOT VENTURE NEAR.

IT'S NOT LIKE I WAS CONTENT TO REMAIN HERE.

WHO'S CON-TROLLING THAT TORNADO?

AND ARE THESE MUMMY-ZOMBIE GUYS CONTROLLED BY HIM, TOO?

YOU SAY WE WERE "BROUGHT HERE"?

WHEN I HEARD ABOUT ALL OF YOU BEING BROUGHT HERE, I WAS DETERMINED THAT THIS TIME I WOULD ESCAPE, NO MATTER WHAT THEY DID TO ME.

...THOUGH IT'S MY BELIEF THAT HE'S ***NOT*** HUMAN.

BUT I HAVE NO IDEA WHO THE MASTERMIND MIGHT BE.

OH, THERE'S NO MISTAK-ING THAT.

FOR FIVE YEARS I'VE TRIED TO FIND OUT AT LEAST THAT MUCH... BUT I HAVEN'T EVEN BEEN ABLE TO DISCOVER WHETHER HE'S HUMAN OR NOT.

...YOU SEE, NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I LEFT THE LAIR TO TRY AND ESCAPE...

...I WAS ALWAYS STOPPED BY A SANDSTORM, OR OTHER ODD THINGS, LIKE AN ENDLESS EXPANSE OF WATER (I GUESS IT MUST'VE BEEN THAT THING THEY CALL 'THE SEA'?) BARRING MY WAY.

IT COULDN'T BE THE ACT OF ANY MORTAL.

THE DES-ERT?

ARE YOU SAYING EVERYTHING THAT'S BEEN ASSAILING US HAS BEEN DOING SO ACCORDING TO THE DESERT'S COMMAND?

THE TORNADO IS CON-TROLLED.

MOST LIKELY BY THE DESERT.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

HMM... MAYBE A SPELL, OR SOME KIND OF TOMFOOLERY BY THE NOBILITY?

IT'S REALLY NOT SO SUR-PRISING.

I ALREADY MEN-TIONED THE MOVING FOREST.

WE'RE ALL MOVING OUT IN YOUR WAGON. LET'S GO.

YO, OLD HAG -

ANYHOW, THE FIRST THING WE HAVE TO DO IS GET OUT OF THIS ROCK PILE.

DO AS YOU LIKE.

IT'S NO USE.

WE'LL JUST BE BROUGHT BACK BY THE TORNADO AGAIN.

THENWHAT THE HELL ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO?!

IS SOME-THING COMING ?

HELL, IF IT'S ONLY TEN OR SO, I CAN TAKE CARE OF 'EM ONE-HANDED.

TO TAKE HIM BACK ...

NO - PERHAPS TO KEEP HIM FROM TALKING.

HORSES.

...PROB-ABLY HIS "FRIENDS."

ABOUT TEN RIDERS.

D...

WE'VE COME FOR THAT MAN.

THE REST OF YOU, WE'LL LET BE.

JUST HAND HIM BACK OVER TO US, AND YOUR LIFE IN THIS PLACE WILL BE GUARANTEED.

...

THAT'D BE BEST, DON'T YOU AGREE?

YOU IN PARTICULAR INTEREST ME GREATLY.

I'D LIKE TO AVOID A FIGHT IF POSSIBLE.

THEN I GUESS IT CAN'T BE HELPED.

CHK

WHOOOSH

?!

BLAM!

BLAM!

BLAM!

BLAM!

BLAM!

WHERE IS THE ROUTE OUT OF THIS PLACE?

I DON'T KNOW.

LO-/ FLICK!

THE DEAD SHOULD RETURN TO BEING DEAD.

CHUK-/

KA HA HA HA HA

DYING, ONLY TO BE RESURRECTED...

MAY YOU SUFFER THE SAME FATE AS OURS...

HAHAHA... SERVES YOU RIGHT!

TRAPPED IN THIS DESERT, USED BY SOME UNKNOWN ENTITY TO ACT FOR SOME UNKNOWN PURPOSE...

I DOUBT THAT LANCE GUY KNOWS THE WAY OUT OF HERE, EITHER.

WELL, NOW WE'RE IN A FIX.

HO HO HO -

TAT TAT TOO OOO

ZZSSSHHHH!!

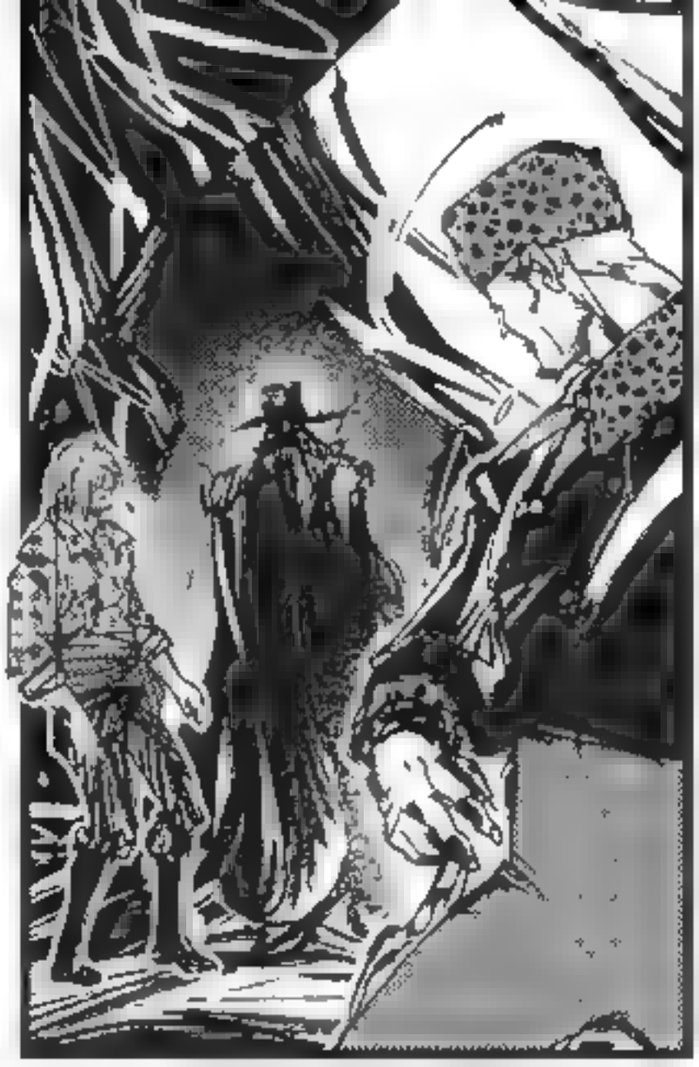
NOW I WANNA KILL YOU MORE THAN EVER -

WITH MY OWN TWO HANDS!

TEN OF THEM, IN LESS THAN TWO SECONDS ...

YOU'RE A GOD-DAMN MONSTER, ALL RIGHT.

I'LL THANK YOU TO LEAVE THAT FOR *AFTER* WE'VE CROSSED THIS DESERT!



SLIP

HE'S PROBABLY DEAD AND SHRIVELED UP BY THE SUN BY NOW.
BRO DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE BEEN BROUGHT HERE, BUT...
I'M GONNA GO TAKE A LOOK AROUND OUT-SIDE.
THUMP
THUNK

...WHO EXACTLY ARE YOU PEOPLE?

THAT'D BE A SIGHT I'D LIKE TO SEE, WITH MY OWN TWO EYES!
?
CHUCKLE
H
H
H

NOW THAT'S AMUS-ING!
...AND DEAD, YOU SAY?
MY BRO, SHRI-VELED UP...?

OH, WE'RE NOT SO DIFFERENT FROM YOU.

THAT HAND-SOME GUY YOU SAW? HE'S A HUNTER.

GRN!!

...IT'S LIKE YOU'RE A COMPANY OF SUPER-NATURAL FREAKS.

I SUSPECTED YOU WERE NO ORDINARY TRAVELERS, BUT...

WHERE ARE YOU GOING? AND FOR WHAT PURPOSE?

OKAY -

SO THE GUYS WHO WERE AFTER YOU HAVE ALL BEEN DEALT WITH.

CARE TO TRY AND REMEM-BER ANY BETTER STORIES ?

BUT I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE ALL THE MEALS THEY WERE GIVING ME CAME FROM.

AT THIS RATE, I'LL SOON BE A SUN-DRIED CORPSE, TOO.

I HOPE SO...

I PROMISE WE'LL GET YOU OUT OF HERE, SAFE AND SOUND.

DON'T YOU WORRY -

YOU ESCAPED KNOWING THAT WAS THE RISK YOU'D FACE, DIDN'T YOU?

YOU'RE A GROWN MAN - STOP ACTING LIKE SUCH A WIMP!

SLAP!

COME WITH ME - I'LL GIVE YOU SOMETHING TO EAT.

IF YOU'RE HUNGRY, WE'VE GOT FOOD IN THE WAGON.

THANK YOU...

I'D ALSO LIKE TO SHAVE, IF I COULD...

...YOU WOULD'VE GRITTED YOUR TEETH AND FORGED ON, AM I RIGHT?

IF YOU HADN'T RUN INTO US...

GRANNY VIPER...

...LEFT ME ALONE WITH YOU.

I GUESS SHE THOUGHT YOU TRUST-WORTHY ENOUGH...

...WHEN IN REALITY, YOU'RE THE MOST DANGEROUS ONE OF ALL...

I NEVER DREAMED I'D BE ABLE TO GO HOME...

I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO HAVE TO SPEND THE REST OF MY LIFE IN THAT NOBLE'S CASTLE.

I DON'T REMEMBER MUCH ABOUT MY TIME THERE, BUT...

THE CASTLE'S, TOO?

BUT YOU DO REMEMBER THE NOBLE'S NAME?

...CASTLE GRADINIA ...

AND THE NOBLE?

WHAT ?

JUST HIM?

...

WAS HE THE ONLY NOBLE YOU MET THERE?

CASTLE GRADINIA SERVES A SPECIAL PURPOSE.

MARQUIS VENESSIGER ...

THERE WAS ONE OTHER...

HE WAS TALLER THAN THE MARQUIS, AND MORE REGAL...

I NEVER SAW HIS FACE, BUT -

...HE HAD BLAZING RED EYES.

-LIKE BURNING JEWELS.

DESCRIBE HIS GAZE.

YES, EXACTLY.

BLAZING CRIMSON, AND PIERCING...

A GAZE THAT SEEMED TO SWALLOW ME UP, BOTH BODY AND SOUL.

...AND I COULD NO LONGER THINK AT ALL...

JUST ONE GAZE FROM HIM...

BUT NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT -

DID HE DO ANYTHING TO YOU?

OH... I KNOW... IT'S BECAUSE HE SEEMED SO TERRIBLY SAD...

NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT... HE KIND OF REMINDS ME OF YOU.

I WONDER WHY?

THE KING WITH RED EYES IS THE ONE WHO REIGNS.

EVEN NOW, IN A WORLD WHERE THE POWER OF THE NOBILITY WANES LIKE THAT OF THE SETTING SUN, A MOVE FROM HIS BLACK WINGS SENDS A GUST OF WIND THAT AFFECTS THE FATE OF MANY.

FLUTTER

NOTHING AT ALL.

I JUST... MET WITH HIM.

...NO.

I ASK AGAIN - WHAT DID HE DO TO YOU?

YOURS MAY BE ONE OF THOSE AFFECTED.

EVEN IF HE DID, I DON'T REMEMBER IT! STOP ASKING SUCH TERRIBLE QUESTIONS!

HE DIDN'T DO ANYTHING TO ME!

STOP ASKING!

TAP TAP TAP TAP

TAP TAP TAP

SO WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE HE *DID* TO HER, EXACTLY?

...THAT GIRL WILL KNOW ONLY SORROW, NO MATTER HOW HARD SHE TRIES.

IN WHICH CASE...

OH HO HO —

...SO IT SEEMS HE DID INDEED GET A TASTE OF HER.

WHAT DID YOU SAY TO THE GIRL?

SHE'S BEEN CRYING EVER SINCE SHE CAME RUNNING INTO THE WAGON.

OVER HERE.

D - ARE YOU IN HERE?

AFTER ALL, SHE'S MY VALUABLE MERCHAN-DISE.

A LITTLE, YEAH.

DOES IT BOTHER YOU?

MMM

LIKE WHAT?

HAVE YOU NOTICED ANY-THING?

YOU'VE BEEN TRAVEL-LING WITH HER -

THAT GIRL MUST RETURN TO HER HOME-LAND.

BUT SHE'S A SENSITIVE YOUNG GIRL WHO WAS FORCED TO LIVE WITH THE NOBILITY FOR YEARS, AND IS NOW ON A LONG, LONG JOURNEY BACK HOME.

ANY PHYSICAL IRREGU-LARITIES?

SWINGS IN HER MENTAL STATE?

I'D SAY IT'D BE MORE UNUSUAL IF SHE ***WASN'T*** ACTING UNUSUAL.

WELL, SURE...

TO A DEGREE, YEAH.

HER PARENTS PASSED AWAY NOT LONG AFTER SHE WAS TAKEN, BUT HER OLDER BROTHER AND HIS WIFE RUN A FARM.

YUP.

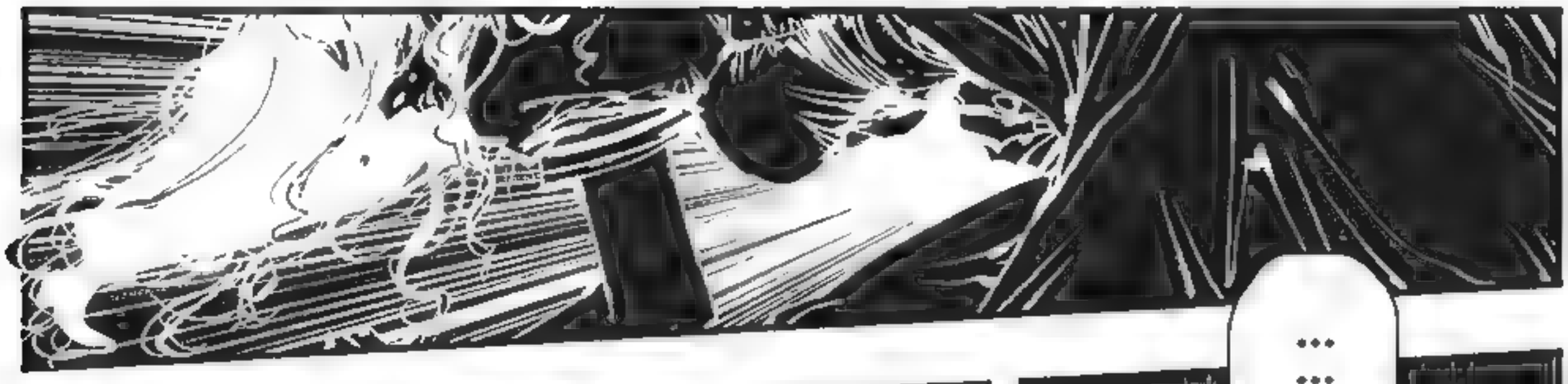
DOES SHE STILL HAVE LIVING FAMILY?

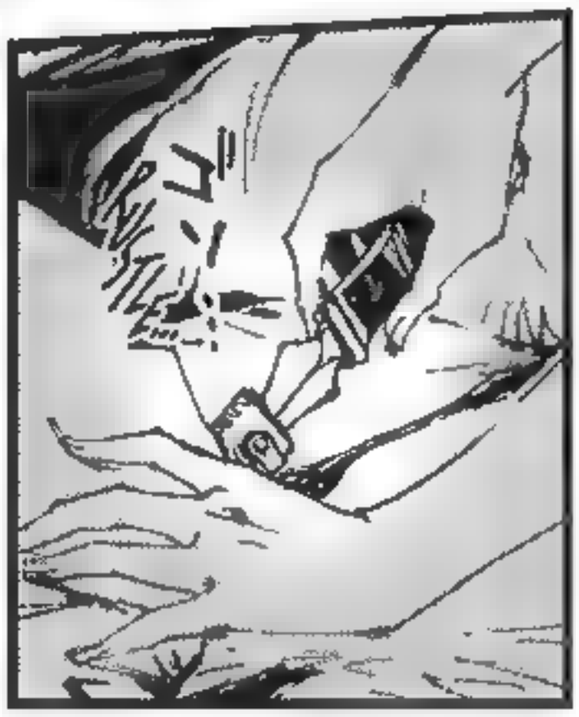
ALONE, SHE MIGHT'VE BEEN FINE... BUT IT WILL BE A HARD LIFE FOR THE TWO.

WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?

OH WELL, NEVER MIND.

JUST HURRY UP AND FIGURE A WAY TO GET US OUT OF THIS STUPID PLACE, WOULD YOU?





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....I CAN'T DO IT.

THUNK
DASH
DON'T WORRY -
I'M FINE.
TAE, YOU -
SLAP!

NOW YOU LISTEN TO ME -

GOT THAT?

REMEMBER THAT!

TRY SOMETHING FUNNY LIKE THIS AGAIN AND I'LL KILL YOU MYSELF!

I'M NOT LETTING YOU PUT EVEN ONE LITTLE SCRATCH ON MY REPUTATION!

FLASH

YOU ARE MY VALUABLE MERCHANDISE.

I CAN'T HAVE YOU DAMAGING YOURSELF AND LOWERING YOUR OWN VALUE!

PLEASE KILL ME.

IF THERE'S SOMETHING YOU DON'T LIKE ABOUT ME, PLEASE GO AHEAD AND KILL ME HERE AND NOW.

I NEVER WANTED TO RETURN HOME IN THE FIRST PLACE.

WHAT DID YOU SAY?!

YOU... DON'T WANT TO GO HOME?

...

SWEAR TO ME YOU'LL NEVER DO SOMETHING FOOLISH LIKE THIS AGAIN!

DID THE NOBILITY DO SOME-THING TO YOU?

TAE...

OH - THEN FINE.

YOU JUST GO AHEAD AND DREDGE UP ONLY THE BAD MEMORIES UNTIL WE'VE CROSSED THIS DESERT.

PLEASE DON'T ASK SUCH A SILLY THING!

!

I...

...DON'T HAVE ANY MEM-ORIES.

A FABRIC SHOP ...?

IT'S NOT LIKE PEOPLE NEED MEMORIES TO LIVE.

THEN JUST FOCUS ON THE FUTURE.

OKAY, OKAY -

I'M GONNA SAVE MY MONEY AND START UP A FABRIC SHOP!

I'VE GOT HOPES AND DREAMS OF MY OWN, YOU KNOW.

IT WAS PRETTY GOOD BUSINESS.

BEFORE I GOT INTO THIS LINE OF WORK, I WAS A MAKER OF CHILDREN'S CLOTHING IN THE CAPITAL.

YEAH. YOU MAY NOT KNOW IT BY THE LOOKS OF ME, BUT I'VE GOT A PRETTY GOOD SENSE OF FASHION.

A FABRIC SHOP...

MAY I REALLY ?!

YOU CAN USE IT IF YOU'D LIKE.

IN THAT BOX ABOVE THE BED? THERE'S A SEWING MACHINE IN THERE!

AND I MAY AS WELL TELL YOU -

CLATTER!

YES, A LITTLE, WHEN I WAS BACK HOME...

HAVE YOU USED ONE BEFORE?

BUT IF YOU WASTE IT, YOUR FAMILY'S GONNA HAVE TO PAY COMPEN-SATION WHEN I HAND YOU OVER!

THERE'S SOME MATERIAL IN THERE.

THEN GO ON AND GIVE IT A TRY.

AND HOO BOY, IS THAT MAN ***EVER*** TOUGH ON HIMSELF!

THOSE WHO ARE SO TOUGH ON THEMSELVES - WELL, IT'S NOT A VERY EASY WAY OF LIFE.

IT'S JUST THAT HE'S SO TRUE TO HIS OWN STOIC WAY OF LIFE, HE DOESN'T HOLD BACK ON SAYING THE HARSH THINGS, TOO.

HE MAY ALWAYS LOOK GRIM, BUT HE'S NOT THE TYPE WHO BLAMES OR SHAMES OTHER PEOPLE.

...

I GATHER THE VAMPIRE HUNTER SAID SOME PRETTY CALLOUS THINGS TO YOU, BUT NEVER YOU MIND.

IF WE WERE TO TEAR OPEN HIS CHEST AND HAVE A LOOK INSIDE, BOTH YOU AND I WOULD PROBABLY PERISH FROM ALL THE SORROW WE'D SEE IN THERE.

HEY! HEY!!

...

CREAK...

YOU WERE LISTEN-ING?

SHE FINALLY FOUND SOMETHING TO TAKE HER MIND OFF THINGS.

THE SOUND OF A SEWING MACHINE ...

...

"THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME" -

IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, HAS THERE EVER BEEN A HIDDEN ONE WHO REMAINED SETTLED AT HOME AFTER THEIR RETURN?

I WOULDN'T KNOW.

AT LEAST, THAT'S THE MAXIM OF TRAVELERS ON THE FRONTIER. BUT IS THAT REALLY THE CASE?

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, THAT I SHOULDN'T TAKE HER HOME?

—ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT THE GIRL?

A HIDDEN ONE?

I MET ONE ONCE.

I FOUND THE BOY, ABOUT EIGHT YEARS OLD, FREEZING ON THE BANKS OF THE RIVER.

THE ENTIRE VILLAGE HAD DRIVEN HIM OUT.

HE DIED, NOT LONG AFTER I HEARD HIS STORY.

GET WHAT?

DON'T YOU GET IT?

HAD HE DONE SOME-THING WRONG?

THAT WAS ALL.

THE BOY HAD BEEN WITH THE NOBILITY FOR THREE MONTHS.

THEN WHY?

OKAY, FINE!

HE HAD DONE NOTHING AT ALL.

HMM...

...WENT TO THE MAYOR AND VIGILANTE LEADER, CLAIMING SHE'D BEEN BITTEN.

BUT A CERTAIN WOMAN, OVERCOME WITH PARANOIA...

AND, EVEN THOUGH IT WAS OBVIOUS AT FIRST GLANCE THAT HER WOUND WAS FAKE...

THE FATHER WHO TRIED TO STOP THEM WAS KILLED, AND THE HOUSE, TORCHED.

HIS MOTHER WAS THERE WITH HIM. THE STORY I CAME TO FROM HER.

DURING THE SIX MONTHS HE LIVED WITH HIS PARENTS, HE SHOWED NOT A SINGLE SIGN OF ANYTHING STRANGE.

A DOCTOR HAD EVEN VERIFIED THAT THERE WAS NOTHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY WITH THE BOY.

...

...IT TOOK LESS THAN AN HOUR FOR THE ENTIRE VILLAGE TO DESCEND UPON THE BOY'S HOME.

HOW AWFUL ...

BUT I'M AMAZED A BOY WHO WAS AT DEATH'S DOOR WAS ABLE TO GIVE YOU SUCH A DETAILED ACCOUNT.

HM?

HIS MOTHER WAS THE WOMAN WHO WENT TO THE MAYOR.

...SO HE WENT IN HIS MOTHER'S ARMS.

WELL, AT LEAST HE GOT THAT MUCH.

GUESS I'D BETTER PREPARE FOR SETTING OUT!

AL-RIGHTY THEN -

GLURN!

...WHICH MEANS IF SOMEONE WANTED TO KILL YOU, THE BEST TIME WOULD BE DURING THE DAY.

I UNDER-STAND IT'S QUITE TOUGH FOR DHAMPIRS TO BE IN THE SUN.

BY THE WAY...

I GUESS THERE'S NO GOING AGAINST YOUR BLOOD -

-OOPS!

HEH...

HUH

WIGGLE

H...

WIGGLE

H

I DIDN'T HEAR ANY-THING...
I - UH -
PANIC
PANIC
OH -!
LOOKS LIKE HE SHAVED.
THEN THAT GIRL IS -...?
...A VAMPIRE HUNTER?
...A HUNTER...

IT'S ALMOST SUNSET...

...AND CLAY STILL HASN'T COME BACK YET.

THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO SHOW YOU GUYS.

FOLLOW ME.

KA-BOOM

HOT DIGGITY! FINALLY-

IT'S FINALLY TIME!

H-HEY! WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER TWO?!

THEY'VE ...

THIS WAY.

...ALREADY BEEN TAKEN TO THE WAGON.

SAVE IT.

OUT-WITTING ME, I CAN UNDER-STAND... BUT D, TOO -

BREAK THE SPELL NOW AND ALL WE'LL BE LEFT WITH IS A MAN WHO HAS NO IDEA WHAT HAPPENED.

THE ONE WHO'S CONTROLLING HIM IS THE ONE WE WANT TO SEE.

HOW COME ?

HM.

JUST HOW FAR ARE WE -

HALT!

-HUMANS LIKE YOU BEFORE.

I HAVE NEVER ENCOUN-TERED BEINGS LIKE YOU -

HMPH! IF YOU WANTED TO STUDY A HUMAN, LANCE ALONE WOULD'VE SUFFICED, NO?

IT IS QUITE AN INTERESTING HUMAN SPECIMEN.

THAT ONE IS CURRENTLY UNDER MY INSPECTION.

IF YOU'VE DONE ANYTHING TO HER, I'LL MAKE YOU REGRET IT!

THE MAN I COULD TAKE OR LEAVE, BUT THE GIRL IS A VALUABLE GUEST OF MINE!

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH THE OTHER TWO?!

IT SEEMS THERE ARE ALL MANNER OF THINGS THAT EXIST BEYOND MY WORLD.

ARE YOU THE DESERT ITSELF?

OH, I GET IT - IT'S THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE EVER SEEN A WOMAN!

-NO.

THUMP

...

-THAT IS RIGHT.

EXTRACT INFORMATION, THEN USE US TO DEATH LIKE YOU DID WITH THAT OTHER MAN?

WHAT DO YOU INTEND TO DO WITH US?

BUT IF ANYONE DOES KNOW, I WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO BE TOLD.

I DO NOT KNOW.

WHEN DID YOU GAIN SENTIENCE?

I WILL LEAVE THIS PLACE.

YOU ARE A FAR MORE DANGEROUS SPECIMEN THAN THAT OTHER MAN.

EVEN IF I TRIED, YOU WOULD PREVENT ME.

I WOULD NOT -

-COULD NOT - DO SUCH A THING.

THEN WHAT WILL YOU DO?

I ASK YOU THE SAME QUESTION.

-ALL RIGHT.

I WILL DO NOTHING TO YOU, SO DO NOTHING TO ME.

I CAN TELL IT WOULD BE FAR TOO DANGEROUS TO FIGHT YOU.

H-HOLD ON A MINUTE!

I WILL GET THE INFORMATION I DESIRE FROM THESE OTHERS.

FINE, I'M LEAVING NOW.

DO AS YOU LIKE.

YOU'RE NOT...

YOU'RE NOT PLANNING ON LEAVING US BEHIND, ARE YOU?!

SNAP!

!

AND IF WE RUN INTO TROUBLE, YOU'LL HELP US OUT! RIGHT?!

YOU DON'T MIND, DO YOU?!

I HAVE NO PLAN.

YOU ALL WERE JUST TAGGING ALONG AFTER ME.

THEN WE'LL KEEP ON TAGGING ALONG!

I STILL HAVE USE FOR THE REST OF YOU.

BUT YOU AND THE OTHER TWO, I'LL INVESTIGATE AT LEISURE.

I'LL DISPOSE OF THE OTHER MAN FOR HIS TREACHERY.

スー

スー...

I WILL DO NOTHING THAT WILL ENDANGER THEIR LIVES.

YOU MAY GO. REST ASSURED.

D...!

THEY ARE PRECIOUS SAMPLES THAT WILL ALLOW ME TO LEARN ABOUT HUMANS.

H... HELP ME, D-!

COME.

フリ フリ フリ フリ フリ フリ フリ フリ

LET ME ASK YOU ONE QUESTION.

I DON'T CARE ABOUT ME -

BUT SAVE THE GIRL - *SAVE TAE!*

WHY DO YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT HUMANS ?

JUST BE QUIET AND GO.

BE GRATEFUL YOU ARE EVEN BEING ALLOWED TO LEAVE IN ONE PIECE.

HELP ME, D...!

...

...

?!

FOOLISH MAN-

BWAHHHH...

TP TP...

STOP.

MMM, TASTY!

THIS WIND IS PRETTY GOOD STUFF!

RECON-SIDER YOUR ACTIONS!

FIGHTING SERVES NEITHER OF OUR INTERESTS.

STOP.

STOP! STOP! STOP!

ROAAARRRR...

CLAK

CLAK

CLAK

YOU FOOL.

SO YOU'VE FINALLY COME.

...IS THAT YOU, D?

I DON'T KNOW.

I CAN'T SEE A THING... WHERE ARE WE?

CAN WE GET OUT?

GET EVERY-ONE BEHIND ME.

HEY, HUNTER!

NOW THAT'S SOME FANCY TRICK-ERY.

-YOU MEAN IT'S SOME KIND OF MIND CONTROL?

UNDER-GROUND ...BUT WE MAY NOT REALLY BE.

...AND SMOKE OUT WHOEVER'S CONTROLLING ALL THIS.

I'M GONNA USE MY FOCUSED SONIC WAVES OF DESTRUC-TION.

TIME TO PLUCK ME A TUNE...

VWOM

THESE THINGS -!

VWOM...

GRIN

IT'LL MAKE YOU FEEL A LITTLE NAUSEOUS BUT YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO BEAR WITH IT.

VWOM

THEY'RE GUARD-IANS.

IF YOU TOUCH ONE, YOU'LL BE PARALYZED.

YOU KNOW WHAT THEY ARE?

IN-TEREST-ING.

GET 'EM! GET 'EM ALL!

HAHAHA, TAKE THAT!

TOOLING...

POP

POP

POP

POP

PLING

POP!

POP!

!

SPLOOOSH

WHAT'S THAT?!

SWISH!

ZA WARUDO!!

RRRR
ROAAAR

TH... THIS IS AN ILLUSION, RIGHT?
D?
DLURP!

RAAAARR...

WUSH!

WUSH!

THAT FINISHES HIM.

GUH!

GLURP

USING YOUR OWN BLOOD...

BLADE

WOULD IT

GRAB

THE

CROSS!!

...YOU ...?!

IT CAN'T BE...

SO IT REALLY *WAS* ALL AN ILLUSION...

I FELT IT – YOU HIT THE MARK.

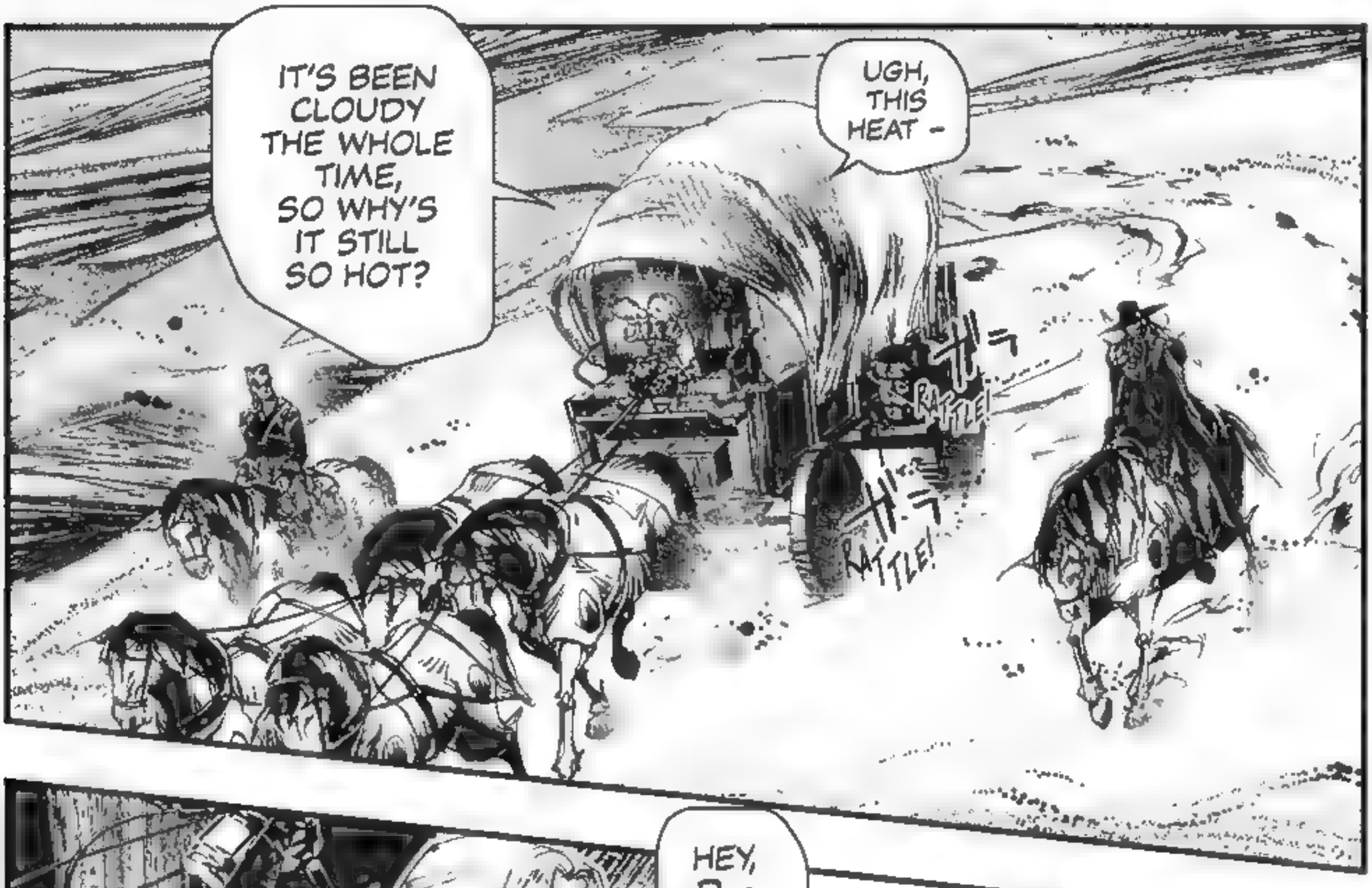
IF WE'RE GOING TO LEAVE, NOW'S THE TIME.

...D?

WE LEAVE IN TWENTY MINUTES.

YOU HANDLE THE REST.

GRRR
GRRR


IT'S BEEN CLOUDY THE WHOLE TIME, SO WHY'S IT STILL SO HOT?
UGH, THIS HEAT -
RATTLE!
RATTLE!

WHAT DO WE HAVE TO DO TO PUT A STOP TO THIS DESERT ONCE AND FOR ALL?
HEY, D -
!?
PFWAH

HE DID LEND HIS STRENGTH TO SAVE YOU -

NOW, NOW -

...WHILE YOU WERE BUSY, YOU KNOW, BEING CONTROLLED?

I'LL RETURN THE FAVOR SOMEDAY.

TCH!

NO ONE CAN KNOW THE ANSWER TO SUCH A BIG QUESTION!

HEH! HOW WOULD HE KNOW THAT?

UNLIKE YOU, THOSE TWO ARE JUST REGULAR PEOPLE.

CAN'T BE HELPED.

BUT NEVERMIND THAT - ARE YOU SURE IT'S ALL RIGHT TO LEAVE THOSE TWO ALONE TOGETHER?

WHAT'S THE MATTER?

A SAND-STORM.

LESS THAN 2 MILES AHEAD.

...I DON'T SEE ANY-THING.

IS IT THE TORNADO AGAIN?

A SAND-STORM.

I CAN'T SEE A DAMN THING!

I CAN.

YOU DON'T WANT THAT EITHER, DO YOU?

WE'LL BE BEHIND SCHEDULE.

BUT WE CAN'T SPARE THAT KIND OF TIME!

OH COME ON, CUT THE BULLSHIT!

IF WE'RE LUCKY, IT'S JUST A REGULAR SAND-STORM...

WE SHOULD GO AROUND.

WE'LL RUN RIGHT INTO IT IF WE KEEP GOING STRAIGHT AHEAD.

...

BAM!

I MEAN, WHAT'S A SANDSTORM OR TWO...

THAT'S THE SPIRIT!

THWAP!

ATTA BOY!

BUT IF YOU'D RATHER RISK IT...

?!

...PATTER PATTER...

NEEEE'GH!

STOP HER, D!

AAAA

ZWOOSH!

WSH!

THOK!

THUD

-WHAT HAP-PENED ?!

WAIT, MISS TAE!

LURCH...

LOOKS LIKE HE'S COME TO.

I'LL TAKE CARE OF THIS.

...STAY PUT.

I WAS JUST TALKING TO HER, WHEN SHE SUDDENLY WHACKED ME WITH A WRENCH!

I DON'T KNOW.

WHAT'S GOING ON?!

WAP!

SPRINKLE

...

SNAP!

THAT'S A TRADE SECRET.

O, HOW ARE THINGS ON YOUR END?

WE SHOULD REST A MO-MENT.

THEN CAN YOU GO TO THE GIRL?

SHE'S LYING UNCON-SCIOUS OUT THERE.

HEY, OLD HAG - WHAT DID YOU DO?

WHAT'S WITH THAT SAND YOU USED?

CRACKLE POP

WHAT DID THAT OLD WOMAN DO?

DON'T MOVE.

WHAT HAP-PENED?

I DON'T KNOW.

D...

!

ZLURRRP

...WHEN SUDDENLY, I FELT LIKE I JUST HAD TO LEAVE...

I WAS TALKING TO MR. LANCE...

AND I HEARD A VOICE TELLING ME TO GO OUTSIDE ...

GLURP...

ZZZT...

FLASH!

CLOP CLOP

D!

I'M ATTACK-ING!

BWOSH
WHIP!
ROAAARRRR

I CLOSED IT BACK UP JUST NOW, BUT WITH SO MANY OF US, WHAT'S LEFT WON'T LAST HALF A DAY.

THE GIRL LET THE SPIGOT OPEN WHEN SHE RAN OFF.

THE WATER'S SHOT.

THERE'S NO NEED TO WASTE WATER ON THOSE WHO AREN'T PULLING THEIR OWN WEIGHT.

ON THE OTHER HAND, IT'LL LAST TWICE AS LONG IF WE HALVE OUR NUMBERS.

TRUE.

BUT D, DAY TRAVEL MUST BE MUCH MORE STRENUOUS FOR YOU THAN IT IS FOR US.

...I GUESS WE CAN TRY.

NIGHT WILL MAKE UP FOR IT.

HOW LONG WILL IT LAST FOR FOUR?

LET'S SEE...A DAY AND A HALF AT MOST.

MAKE IT LAST.

AT ANY RATE, THERE'S NO WAY IT'LL LAST UNTIL WE GET TO TOWN.

GIVE HIM MY SHARE.

...I DON'T NEED ANY, EITHER.

I NEVER IMAGINED YOU WERE ONE TO CARE ABOUT OTHERS!

THAT'S VERY NOBLE OF YOU BUT STILL, I'M SORRY - IT'S ME AND TAE WHO WILL BE TAKING YOUR SHARE.

WELL, KNOCK ME OVER WITH A FEATHER!

OH DEAR! OH MY! WHAT WONDER-FUL WORDS!

I'VE LIVED A LONG TIME, BUT IN ALL MY LIFE I'VE NEVER HEARD SUCH ADMIRABLE LINES!

WHAT?

IF WORD EVER GOT AROUND THAT I TOOK IT EASY FOR MYSELF WHILE OTHERS SUFFERED, I'D NEVER LIVE IT DOWN.

IF HE AIN'T DRINKING, I AIN'T EITHER. I CAN'T BE THE ONLY ONE WETTING MY WHISTLE WHILE HE GOES DRY.

NO NEED.

ALL RIGHT, THEN - GIVE YOUR ENTIRE SHARE TO TAE.

YES SIR, YOU MEN *SURE* ARE GRAND.

SEEMS WE MAY NOT HAVE NEEDED TO BRING HER BACK.

WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE SHE'S UP TO NOW?

THIS WAY.

WORRIED ABOUT THE SAND-STORM?

IF YOU WANT WATER, TAKE OVER THE REINS FOR ME, WILL YOU?

HEY, YOU!

I SWEAR ...

SHE'S BEEN WALKING FOR THREE HOURS NOW.

JUST WHERE IS SHE TAKING US?

RATTLE RATTLE

IS SHE OKAY?

...
...

THERE'S SHADE, TOO.

IT'S MUCH EASIER UP HERE.

WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO TRADE PLACES WITH ME AND SIT HERE IN THE WAGON?

UM... HEY -

BUT -

DON'T CON-CERN YOUR-SELF.

IS SOME-THING THE MATTER ?

YEAH, BUT I'M BEGINNING TO LOSE MY CONFIDENCE EVEN IN THAT.

?

I CAN AT LEAST MANAGE TO STAY ON AT A WALK.

A LITTLE.

HAVE YOU RIDDEN A HORSE BEFORE?

I'M USED TO IT.

YOUR JOB IS TO TURN THE BARREN WILDERNESS GREEN.

ALL I CAN DO IS TILL SOIL AND PLANT SEEDS.

YOU ALL HAVE SUCH AMAZING POWERS.

IN COMPARISON, I'M JUST A PLAIN OLD FARMER.

WHY IS THAT?

THAT D. IS SHOWING CONCERN ...?

DO YOU SUPPOSE THERE'S STILL TIME FOR ME TO BECOME A HUNTER AT THIS AGE?

HEY - RIGHT NOW, I'M TWENTY-FIVE.

...I COULDN'T EVEN RESCUE MYSELF WITHOUT ALL OF YOU GUYS' HELP.

I FEEL PATHETIC.

ONCE I FOUND MYSELF OUT HERE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DESERT...

WELL?

GUYS LIKE YOU ARE BETTER SUITED TO BE "VEGGIE HUNTERS" OR "PIGGLY-WIGGLY HUNTERS"!

HEH!

IF IT WERE THAT EASY FOR SODBUSTERS TO BECOME HUNTERS, WE'D BE UP TO OUR ASSES IN 'EM!

IF ONLY I COULD WIELD A SWORD LIKE A DHAMPIR, TOO...

OH... IF ONLY -

I COULD SETTLE FOR THAT.

BAH!

AHHAHAHA

HEEE HEE HEE

WHAT'S SO FUNNY?!

HOW COULD I NOT LAUGH AT THAT?!

YOU'RE THE FIRST PERSON I'VE EVER MET WHO ***WISHES*** HE WERE A DHAMPIR!

I GUESS IT'S TRUE - FARMERS REALLY DON'T KNOW ANYTHING.

CACKLE CACKLE

YOU'RE BETTER OFF SOWING SEEDLINGS ALL YOUR LIFE.

WHAT'S SO FUNNY ABOUT BEING A DHAMPIR ?

SOUNDS LIKE A FINE THING TO ME.

BUT YOU HAVE NO IDEA OF THE DEATHLY PAIN HE'S ENDURING RIGHT NOW AS HE TRAVELS.

ALL WOMEN - NO, EVEN MEN - TAKE ONE LOOK AT HIS HANDSOME VISAGE AND GO WEAK IN THE KNEES.

ABSO-LUTELY STUNNING FROM HEAD TO TOE -

THE VERY VISION OF PERFEC-TION.

TAKE A LOOK AT THAT YOUNG MAN.

...?

YOU THINK PEOPLE ADMIRE AND APPRECIATE DHAMPIRS?

DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHAT KIND OF UPROAR HAPPENS AT A VILLAGE THAT HIRES A DHAMPIR?

IN REALLY BAD CASES, THEY'RE HERDED INTO ONE LOCATION AND LOCKED UP UNTIL THE DHAMPIR'S JOB IS DONE.

FIRST OF ALL, NO WOMEN OR CHILDREN ARE EVER ALLOWED TO SET FOOT OUTSIDE THEIR HOUSES WHILE THE DHAMPIR IS IN TOWN.

SUNLIGHT BURNS HIS FLESH LIKE THE FLAMES OF A BLOWTORCH.

THE MERE TOUCH OF A ROSE WOULD MAKE HIM SCREAM AND WITHER AWAY IN AGONY.

RUNNING WATER RENDERS HIM HELPLESS IF HE FALLS INTO IT. HE COULDN'T EVEN MOVE.

BUT...

STILL, ALL OF THAT IS BEAR-ABLE.

AND IN THE CASE OF LIVESTOCK, WELL, THEY'RE PUT DOWN ON THE SPOT.

ANY HAND OR FOOT THAT HAS COME IN CONTACT WITH THE DHAMPIR IS SCRUBBED AND SANITIZED UNTIL THE SKIN IS PEELING OFF...

...

WHEN, THE ENTIRE TIME YOU'RE IN THE VILLAGE, NOT A SINGLE SOUL WILL LOOK YOU IN THE FACE -

NOW THAT'S WHAT GETS TO YOU.

EVERY-ONE?

UH, LET'S PRETEND YOU DIDN'T HEAR ANY OF THAT JUST NOW, ALL RIGHT?

OH MY GOODNESS ME!

OH -

OH -

OH -

FLAIL

FLAIL

FLAIL

UH, WELL, ANYWAY, PLEASE SAY IT DIDN'T BOTHER YOU.

OH WAIT - YOU ALWAYS LOOK LIKE THAT.

OKAY, D?

AW, PLEASE DON'T MAKE SUCH A SCARY FACE!

PLEASE ?

JUST SAY IT - TELL ME IT DIDN'T BOTHER YOU.

OH, COME ON NOW!

DON'T TAKE AN OLD WOMAN'S HYSTERICAL RANTINGS TO HEART!

...

IT MAKES NO DIF-FERENCE TO ME.

COME ON, PLEASE? AS A SPECIAL FAVOR TO AN ELDERLY OLD WOMAN ?

NO, NO - NOT, "IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE." SAY, "IT DIDN'T BOTHER ME."

THANK YOU!

...

IT DIDN'T BOTHER ME.

...DHAMPIRS HAVE IT PRETTY HARD.

I GUESS ...

ZZSSH

ZZSSH

I CAN UNDERSTAND WHY YOU'D DESPAIR OF FARMING IN A PLACE LIKE THIS.

I SEE.

I SUPPOSE THE JOB OF A HUNTER'S ABOUT ALL YOU'RE GOOD FOR WITH THAT KIND OF GRIM ATTITUDE.

I GUESS EVEN THAT JERK OF A DESERT HAS A CONSIDERATE SIDE.

THIS SOUND - IT'S WATER!

IT CAN'T AFFORD TO HAVE US DIE. THAT'S ALL.

AN 8 OR 9 OUT OF 10 CHANCE, YES.

THINK IT'S A TRAP..?

SO THIS IS THE "MOVING FOREST"?

NICE!
LET'S HAVE A SWIM.

TAE!

DOESN'T SEEM DANGER-OUS...

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

LOOKS LIKE IT'S SAFE TO SWIM.

SHAAA...

AGAIN? THAT'S NOT SAFE!

IN THE WAGON WITH LANCE.

HEY! COME OUT FOR A SECOND!

BAM

BAM

BAM

WE NEED TO TALK!

NO MORE WORRIES ABOUT THE WATER SUPPLY NOW!

WHERE'S TAE?

ME?

HE WAS JUST LOOKING AFTER ME, THAT'S ALL.

JUST THOUGHT HE AND I SHOULD HAVE A NICE LITTLE WALK.

PLEASE - NO VIOLENCE!

NOT YOU - THE FELLA!

YES?

キィ

CREAK...

D, GRANNY - PLEASE, STOP THEM!

I MAY NOT LOOK IT, BUT AMONG THE WARRIOR SET, I'M KNOWN AS QUITE THE HONORABLE GENT.

DON'T WORRY, LITTLE MISSY!

THIS IS HOW MEN DO - IT'S HOW THEY SETTLE THINGS.

LET THEM GO.

HE'S... GONE ?

AS FOR YOU, YOU NEED TO CONTEMPLATE WHAT IT MEANS FOR TWO MEN TO BE FIGHTING OVER YOU.

THEN AFTER YOU'RE DONE WITH THAT, GET BACK TO YOUR SEWING.

D!

HEY! HOLD ON A -

HE PROBABLY WENT TO CHECK OUT THE AREA.

...

I'LL... I'LL GO LOOK FOR HIM!

TAP TAP TAP TAP

SHE IS AT THAT AGE, AFTER ALL...

OH WELL, I SUPPOSE IT CAN'T BE HELPED.

HEY, YOU TWO - YOU'D BEST STOP RIGHT NOW, UNLESS YOU WANT TO LOOK LIKE THE WORLD'S BIGGEST FOOLS.

...

MISS TAE

OH!

H'H... TA-TAH

FFSHAAA...
FFFF...

UM...

MR. CLAY AND MR. LANCE STARTED FIGHTING, AND -

WHY DID YOU COME HERE?

...HE DOESN'T CARE.

IT'S NO GOOD TELLING HIM THIS.

YOU DON'T CARE WHAT HAPPENS TO OTHER PEOPLE.

YOU'RE MADE OF NOTHING BUT ICE AND DARKNESS THROUGH AND THROUGH.

-YOU'RE A COLD, COLD MAN.

THEY SAY DHAMPIRS HAVE HUMAN BLOOD MIXED IN WITH THAT OF THE NOBILITY'S...

...BUT IT'S A LIE.

YOU HAVE ONLY THE COLD, DARK BLOOD OF THE NOBLES RUNNING THROUGH YOUR VEINS.

I WAS SO HOPEFUL ABOUT YOU...

...I WAS SO HAPPY.

I THOUGHT, IF A MAN LIKE YOU COULD BE A DHAMPIR, THEN - WELL...

THAT CHILD WITHIN YOU - WHO IS ITS SIRE?

FLINCH!

YOU ARE WITH CHILD.

WHICH NOBLE DOES IT BELONG TO?

I... I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

I DON'T KNOW!

IS IT "HIM"?

WELL?

... ... THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO.

...BACK WHEN I WAS STILL AT THE CASTLE.

WHEN DID YOU REALIZE?

-UM, DO YOU KNOW WHEN THE BIRTH WILL BE?

I UNDER-STAND IT'S TYPICALLY TEN MONTHS AND TEN DAYS...

NOR-MALLY, YES.

BUT IN YOUR CASE, IT WILL BE SIX MONTHS AFTER YOU FIRST NOTICED THE SIGNS.

...."IN MY CASE"?

W... WHAT DO YOU MEAN...

WHAT COULD I HAVE DONE?

THEY HAD THE POWER TO KILL ME BY LIFTING JUST ONE FINGER.

I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO DO AS THEY WANTED.

...THAT CHILD WILL BE NO ORDINARY DHAMPIR.

IF IT'S INDEED "HIS"...

WAIT - IT... IT CAN'T BE...

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING ?

LET US GO BACK.

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING WILL HAPPEN ?

NO!

TELL ME!

EH THAT...

IT WILL BE JUST LIKE YOU...?

AN AMUSING, YET TERRIBLE TALE, NO?

COME TO THINK OF IT, THERE'S SOMETHING NOSTALGICALLY FAMILIAR ABOUT THIS DESERT.

YOU'VE NOTICED IT, TOO, HAVEN'T YOU?

ONE CAN ONLY WONDER WHAT THIS GIRL'S PATH WILL BE...

"WHY CAN SUCH A GOOD THING TURN SO BAD?"

I REMEMBER THERE WAS A WOMAN WE MET IN THE PAST, WHO ASKED –

レミィ

WHERE DID IT ALL GO WRONG, I WONDER ?

DO YOU THINK THIS IS A "GOOD THING" ?

HARD TO SAY.

HA H?

LANCE

HA H..

HA H..

SO HE WON, THEN.

SHE'LL WAKE UP IN TEN MIN-UTES.

I PUT HER TO SLEEP.

SHE'S ALL RIGHT.

VERY PERCEP-TIVE OF YOU!

GRIN

THAT FARMER LAD - HE'S PRETTY GOOD!

THAT FOOL CLAY IS OVER THERE, PASSED OUT IN THE BUSHES.

USED ONLY BARE FISTS THE WHOLE TIME.

BUT I MUST SAY, CLAY HAS A GOOD SIDE, TOO.

HEH HEH...

A LOT OF HUNTERS AND WARRIORS USED TO PASS THROUGH MY VILLAGE, AND THEY TAUGHT ME A THING OR TWO ABOUT COMBAT.

BESIDES, NO ONE CAN BEST A FARMER IN A BARE-KNUCKLE FIGHT!

I USED TO BE QUITE THE TROUBLE-MAKER WHEN I WAS A KID, YOU KNOW.

SO I UNDER-STAND YOU WON AGAINST HIM.

CLAY CHOSE HIS OPPONENT BADLY.

AND IT WAS OVER THE GIRL?

THAT'S RIGHT.

YOU REALLY GAVE IT YOUR ALL, THEN.

CLAMP!

えっ HUH?!

ROUND 2 - LET'S GO!

I WON'T TAKE NO FOR AN ANSWER!

STAGGER

SO THERE YOU ARE, FARM BOY...

ALL RIGHT, FINE. VAMPIRE HUNTER "D" HERE WILL BE OUR WITNESS.

IF I WIN...

...YOU PROMISE TO NEVER MAKE A MOVE ON THAT GIRL EVER AGAIN.

おおおお!

YAAAAAHHH!

KLUNK!

HRRGH!

WHOOSH

SPLASH!

WHOA!

WAI-...

!

LEAP!

ドバッ
I DOUBT THERE'LL BE A ROUND 3.
ZSH
WHOMP!
AHA HA
はは

SHAAA...

SNAP

CRACKLE

SPLISH

WANT A SWIG?

GUESS I CHOSE THE WRONG GUY FOR A DRINKING PARTNER!

AL-RIGHTY.

NO.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

REALLY? OKAY.

I HEAR TAE SAID SOME TERRIBLE THINGS TO YOU, TOO.

PLEASE DON'T TAKE ANY OF IT TO HEART.

AND IT'S NOT JUST ME -

I'M SORRY.

PLEASE FORGIVE US.

HEY, ABOUT WHAT I SAID TO YOU EARLIER IN THE DAY -

SHAAA

...

OH, THAT'S A LOAD OFF MY MIND!

I'M COUNTING ON YOUR CONTINUED HELP IN THE FUTURE.

NOW I FINALLY FEEL AT PEACE.

I MEAN, I DIDN'T EXPECT YOU TO BE PETTY ABOUT IT OR ANYTHING, BUT STILL -

...

YOU -

YOU KNOW, DON'T YOU?

THE GIRL - SHE'S PREGNANT.

UNLESS SHE SOMEHOW DOESN'T MAKE IT THROUGH ALIVE, SHE'S GONNA HAVE TO GIVE BIRTH SOONER OR LATER.

AND THE CHILD IS LIKELY A NOBLE'S.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE KID?

IS IT GONNA TURN OUT TO BE A DHAMPIR ?

HEY -

IF IT'S A NOBLE'S CHILD, YES.

SHAAA...

OH?

CUZ THAT'S MY JOB.

YOU MEAN YOU'RE CONCERNED FOR THE FATE OF ANOTHER?

I INTEND TO RETURN HER HOME, THAT'S WHAT.

WHAT DO YOU INTEND TO DO?

–SOMETHING NOT FOUND IN ANY OTHER HUNTER'S VOCABULARY –

SURELY A MAN LIKE YOU MUST KNOW OF SOME WAY A DHAMPIR CAN MAKE IT IN THE WORLD WITHOUT RESORTING TO BECOMING A HUNTER.

YOU'RE A DHAMPIR, TOO.

I'VE GOT AN IDEA – WHY DON'T ***YOU*** LOOK AFTER THE KID?

IS THAT WHAT YOU THINK?

YEAH!

THEN WHY DO YOU SUPPOSE I AM A HUNTER?

YOU'RE SEARCHING FOR A "TOMORROW".

SUCH AS?

YOU COULD NEVER LIVE CASUALLY AMONGST THE NORMAL PEOPLE – YOUR PRIDE WOULD NEVER ALLOW IT!

AW, YOU'RE JUST AWKWARD IS ALL.

BESIDES... I SENSE YOU'RE SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING.

ALL I'M SAYING IS, THERE'S A BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THOSE WHO RESIGN THEMSELVES TO NEVER KNOWING THESE THINGS AND THOSE WHO GO OUT SEARCHING FOR THEM!

...EXCEPT IN YOUR CASE, I GET THE FEELING IT'S SOMETHING MORE YOU'RE AFTER.

NOW, DON'T LAUGH.

"DREAMS"
"HOPE"
"RAINBOWS"...

..."LOVE".

BUT WHATEVER IT IS, SURELY YOU COULD TEACH TAE'S CHILD ABOUT IT, TOO?

...

AND THAT IS - ?

I DUNNO.

I DON'T EVEN HAVE A CLUE AS TO WHAT IT MIGHT BE.

BUT THAT DOESN'T CHANGE THE FACT THAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR SOMETHING.

HUH?

SORRY, BUT THERE'S SOMEONE MORE SUITABLE FOR HER THAN ME.

ONCE I'VE DELIVERED HER HOME, I'VE NO LONGER GOT ANY OBLIGATIONS TO HER.

YEAH, YOU SHOULD DO THAT!

JUST TAKE HER AWAY WITH YOU SOMEWHERE!

I DON'T REALLY UNDER-STAND THE SITUA-TION...

...BUT I'VE GOT A FEELING WE COULD MAKE IT.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT ?!

YOU KNEW HE WAS LISTENING, DIDN'T YOU?!

WHAT THE - ? YOU BUSY-BODY!

TCH 4 '14

I HEARD EVERY-THING.

JAX

SHE AND I COULD LIVE TOGE-THER, AND -

UH... WELL -

SAVE YOUR RAMBLINGS FOR YOUR DREAMS.

IT'S NOT GONNA BE AS EASY AS THAT!

I'LL DO EVERYTHING I CAN TO HELP IT FIND THE BEST WAY OF LIFE.

LEAVE THE CHILD TO ME.

FLIK!

DON'T TALK SO BIG!

THAT'S WHAT YOU'LL DO, TOO.

BUT ONCE THE BLOOD OF THE NOBILITY AWAKENS WITHIN THEM, ALL THOSE SWEET-TALKING SUITORS...

...SUDDENLY RUN AND HIDE.

DHAMPIRS - BOTH MALE AND FEMALE - ARE TYPICALLY VERY BEAUTIFUL OF FACE.

AS INFANTS AND CHILDREN, THEY'RE THE VERY IMAGE OF SWEET LITTLE ANGELS.

EVEN KNOWING THEY'RE DHAMPIRS, TONS OF SUITORS COME FLOCKING FOR THEIR AFFECTION.

THAT GIRL IS TOO GOOD FOR A FARMER THE LIKES OF YOU!

YOU'LL BE DEAD BEFORE THIS TRIP IS THROUGH ANYWAY.

AFTER THAT, IT'S UP TO HER WHICH MAN SHE CHOOSES.

WELL SAID, OLD HAG!

AND YOU THINK THAT MAN WILL BE YOU, DO YOU?

HAVE YOU LOOKED IN A MIRROR LATELY?

OXOO

DON'T BE STUPID!

YOUR WEAPON - IS IT STRICTLY FOR KILLING?

EH?

THEN GIVE US A TUNE.

HEH!

I DEPEND ON THIS TREASURE TO PROTECT MY LIFE! WHY SHOULD I WASTE IT PLAYING FOR YOU LOT?

NOT EVEN FOR THE GIRL?

THIS HARP?

I GOT IT WHEN I KILLED ONE OF THE NOBILITY - PLUNDERED IT FROM HIS MUSIC ROOM.

JUST LOOK AT IT - STRINGS OF SILVER...

...BODY OF SOLID GOLD.

WITH IT, I CAN PLAY HEAVENLY MUSIC LIKE YOU GUYS HAVE NEVER HEARD!

NOD

YOU'D LIKE TO HEAR HIM, TOO, WOULDN'T YOU?

WELL... IT'S TOTALLY WASTED ON ALL YOUR ROTTING EARS, BUT...

SO? HOW ABOUT IT?

ALL RIGHT, I'LL PERFORM ONE OF MY SPECIALLY RESERVED TUNES!

WOO-HOO!

CLAP

CLAP

JA-JANG!

JUST DON'T GO DIVING INTO THE WATERFALL BASIN IN RAPTURE OF MY BEE-YOOTIFUL VOICE OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT!

HM, HE'S PRETTY GOOD.
FROM HIS LOOKS, YOU'D NEVER GUESS HE HAD SUCH A BEAUTIFUL SINGING VOICE.

HI-SHAAA...

HI-P-P-OOO

HO-HO-HO

GOT IT NOW? OLD HAG! STUPID FARMER!

OH-

VERRRRY NICE!

OOPS!

I FORGOT - I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO MAKE A MOVE ON YOU WHILE THIS FARMER'S STILL ALIVE.

SO HOW ABOUT IT?

WHY NOT FORGET ABOUT RETURNING TO YOUR HOMELAND, AND -

ANY GIRL WHO HAS TASTE CAN TELL WHO THE BEST MAN IS HERE!

WHY DON'T YOU GET SOME SLEEP?

I'LL DO THAT.

THUMP

FORGET I SAID ANYTHING, WILL YA?

CHUCKLE

HUH?

...

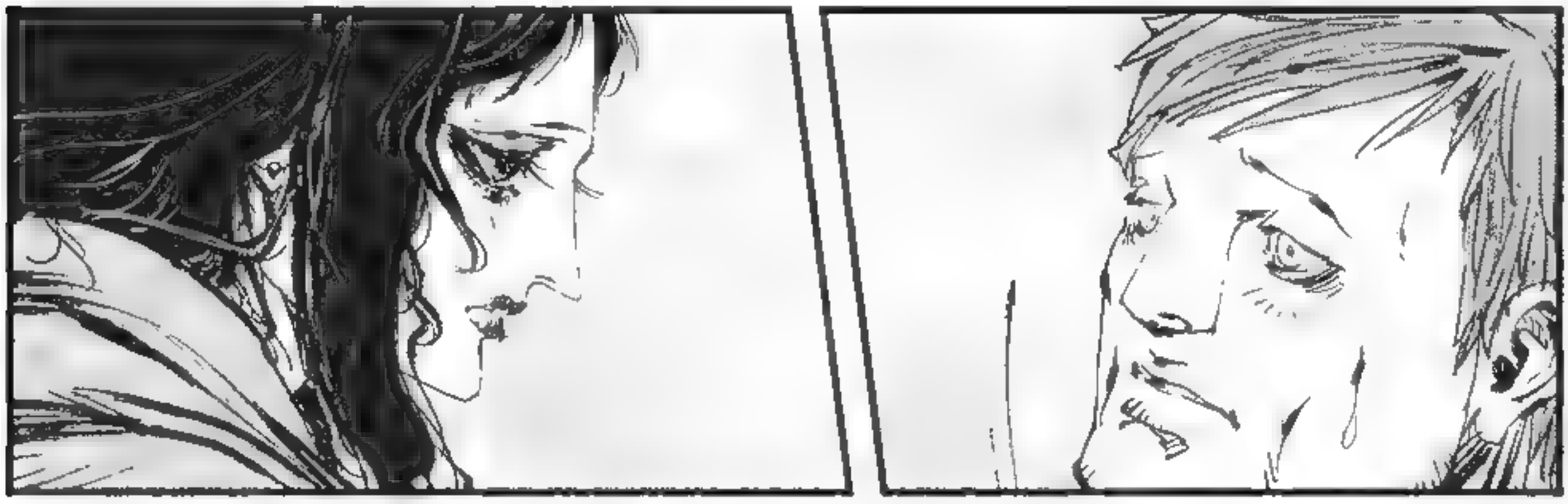
TIME TO GO INSIDE NOW.

CONK

CONK

THUNK

AHH...



I'm...

THOK
TH-THOK
RUSTLE
WHY THAT LITTLE - ...

WHETHER HUMAN OR DHAMPIR - NO ONE CAN KNOW WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS.

...

KI

KI

KI

KI

BA-THUMP

BA-THUMP

BA-THUMP

I WANT TO LIVE... WITH HER...

BA-THUMP...

SPLISH!

16
SEE EYE

GAAAHH!

SLASH!

LANCE!

GET BACK IN THE WAGON.

WHAT'S GOING ON?!

WHISH!

COVER YOUR EARS AND STAY DOWN!

¡HOOOH...!

GLUNK

GLUNK

WHAT IS THAT THING?!

7 11/ FFT

HERE IT COMES!

SPLOOSH!

DAMMIT, I CAN'T SEE A THING!

TAE! BREAK OUT THE GLOW BUGS!

FOLLOW ME!

WE'RE LEAVING THIS FOREST.

CLOP

KA-KLAK!

HITTIK
HITTIK
BLOW
OH!
WHSH
WHOOSH!
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
DROP
ROLL
ROLL

ARE YOU OKAY?

GRIN

KUBLAM!

YES.

DIU

STINGER

LANCE!

I KNOW YOU WILL.

I'LL ALWAYS PROTECT YOU...

DON'T WORRY...

I SEE THE EXIT!

FWSH

RATTLE RATTLE

KEEP GOING!

NOT YET!

HUH? WHA-...

DDD...

SKREEK!

ROAAARRR...

THE FOREST... IS MOVING...

RUMBLE...

NO - IT'S REAL.

IS THIS ANOTHER ILLUSION ?!

D-!

ZWOOSH

I SEE.

THAT MEANS I CAN HANDLE IT.

RUMBLE...

RUSTLE...

RUSTLE

ZWOOOSH...

KA-KLUNK

MR. CLAY IS STILL BACK IN THE FOREST...

I DROPPED THE GLOW BUG BY ACCIDENT AND -

DAMMIT!

GRANNY- ...

WHEW!

NOW THEN...

CRAP!

WHERE'S THE EXIT?!

WEEEEE!!

THUD

FWUM

FRRSH!

HHHRRR

HOP ON.

KA-KLAK

KA-KLAK

KA-KLAK

WHAM

WHAM

THANK THE OLD WOMAN INSTEAD.

EH?

THAT'S ANOTHER ONE I OWE YOU.

KA-KLAK

KA-KLAK

THE FOREST HAS INCREASED ITS SPEED!

KA-KLAK!

HURRY!

SHE'S THE ONE WHO BEGGED ME TO SAVE YOU.

KA-KLAK!

KA-KLAK!

HEH! THAT SOFT-HEARTED OLD GEEZER ...

THEN WHY THE HELL ARE YOU JUST STANDING THERE?!

JUST YOU WATCH ME...

...WORK MY MAGIC.

ZWOOSH!!

BWAAAAHHH!!

I'M TOO OLD FOR THIS, I TELL YOU.

UGH!

WHUMP

YOU... ERASED THE FOREST...

...WHAT'S WRONG?

MR. LANCE HAS PASSED AWAY.

MUST'VE BEEN A STRAIN FOR YOU TO MAKE THAT...

HE WENT BEFORE WE COULD HAVE OUR REMATCH.

THAT FOOL ...

D-... THAT GRAVE MARKER YOU MADE...

IT SURE IS AN ODD SHAPE...

WE HEREBY COMMIT OUR BELOVED INTO THE ETERNAL REST OF THY KINGDOM, INTO THE DREAMS OF THY GENTLE ARMS...

THOUGH WE WANDER THE EARTH SEEKING THEE, NO ANSWERS ARE GIVEN, NAUGHT BUT SHADOW DO WE SEE IN THIS TROUBLED WORLD.

I USED TO SAY MY PRAYERS EVERY MORNING WITHOUT FAIL WHEN I WAS BACK AT THE CASTLE OF THE NOBILITY ...

STRANGE ...

...I'VE FORGOT-TEN HOW IT GOES.

...

NEITHER GREAT NOR SMALL ARE WE;
OFF INTO THE DISTANCE WE GO,
ONLY TO BE BORN AGAIN,

AND THUS ARE WE CALLED
THE FAR WANDERERS...

YET WE KNOW NOT FEAR;
THE WORDS OF SILENCE ARE
KNOWN TO US,

AND AS WE SEE THE
UNSEEN -

WE ARE THEE
AND THOU
ART US.

D...

THIS FAR WANDERER WE NOW COMMIT TO THEE.

ZAZAZA

GRAAHHH...

THEY'RE RESUR-RECTING THEM-SELVES.

BLOP

...THEY SEEM DIFFERENT FROM BEFORE.

ZSH

LET'S GO.

D! SOME-ONE'S COMING!

INTER-ESTING -

SO THE DESERT'S EVOLVING, TOO.

I'M GONNA BLOW AWAY EVERY SINGLE ONE OF YOU INTO PIECES!

BRO!

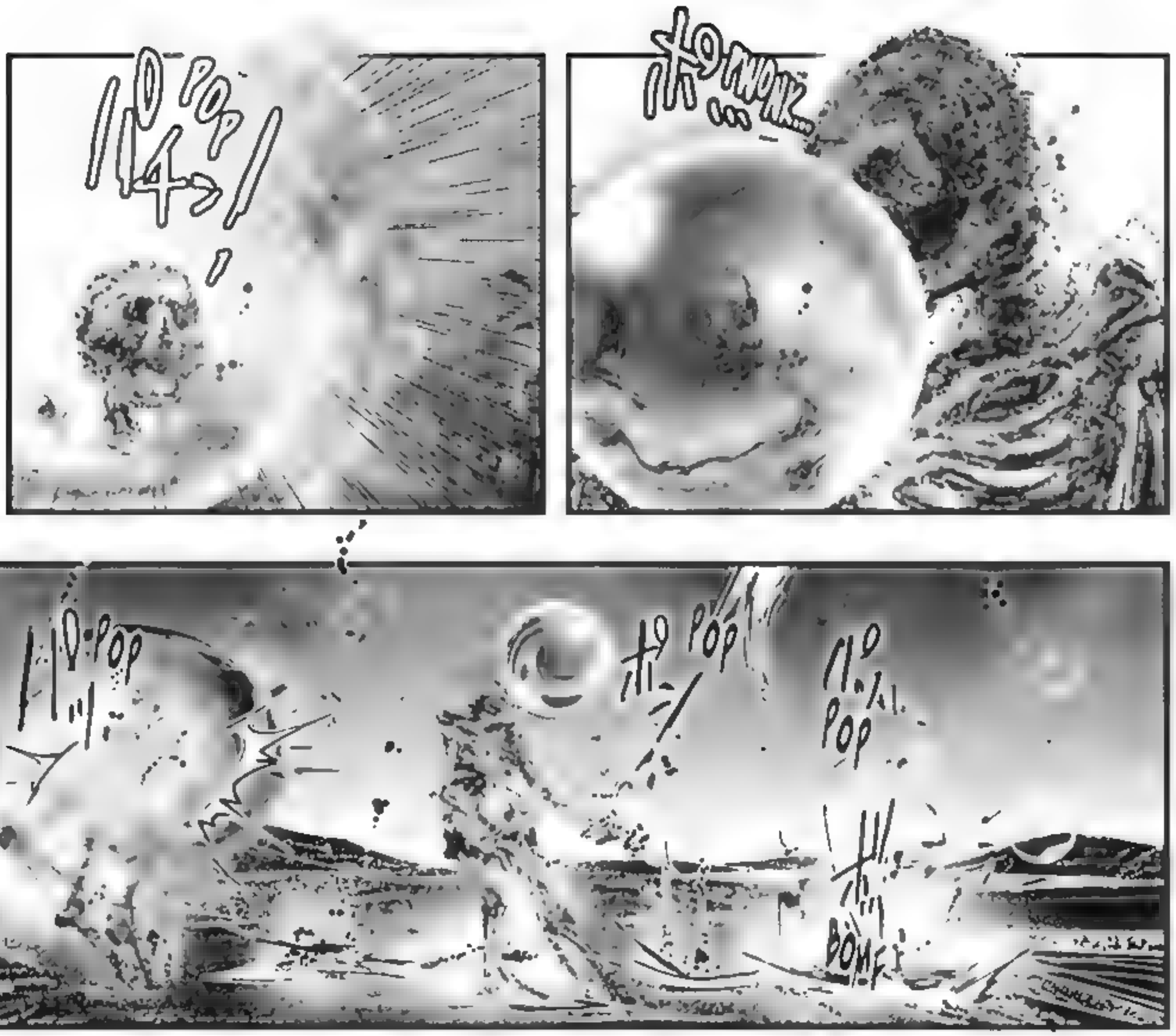
HI, I'M ONK!

OR YOU'LL BE WIPED OUT OF EXIST-ENCE!

NOT GOOD!

EVERY-ONE, GET BACK IN THE WAGON!

ONK! ONK! ONK! ONK!


POP
FOOM...
POP
POP
POP
POP
BOM!

H-HEY THERE, BRO...

ZSH
ZSH
ZSH
UH
UH

THEY DISAP-PEARED !!
WHAT IS THIS STRANGE SENSA-TION – ??

I SEE YOU'VE BEEN LOOKING AFTER MY BROTHER FOR ME.

STILL WITH THEM, ARE YOU?

THE SUN WILL BE COMING UP SOON...

-BY GOING BACK TO THE SAND-STORM.

SO WHAT'LL WE DO NOW?

BUT HOW?

...WE FINISH THE DESERT OFF, ONCE AND FOR ALL.

LET'S HURRY AND PUT IT OUT OF ITS MISERY.

?

YES.

YOU SAW IT, THEN?

YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING! I'M NOT -

WHAT ?!

HE'S RIGHT.

LET'S GO.

HMM-ZSH... HMM OOO

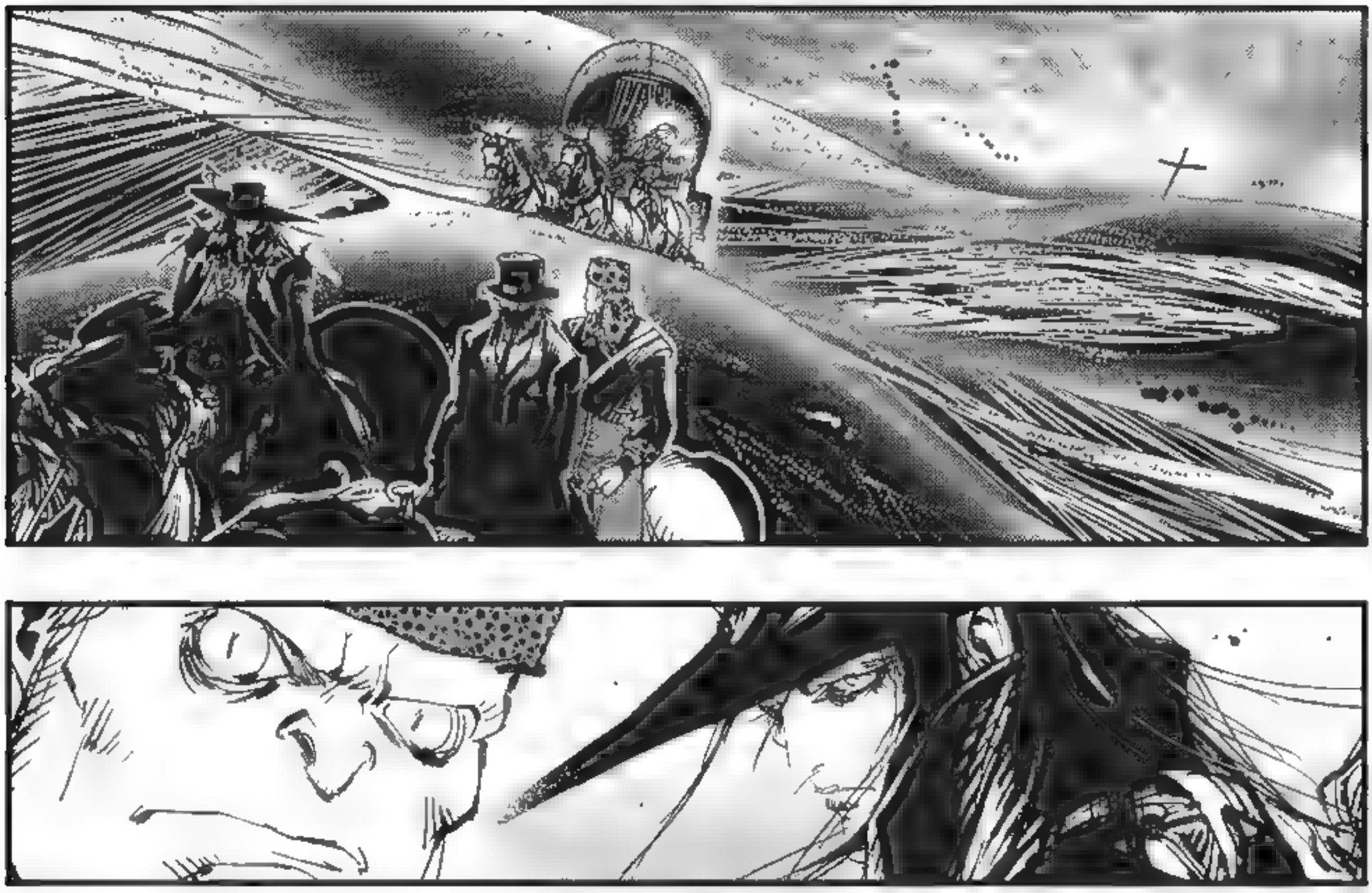
RATTLE RATTLE RATTLE

ONCE HE SETS HIS MIND TO SOMETHING, THERE'S NO CHANGING IT!

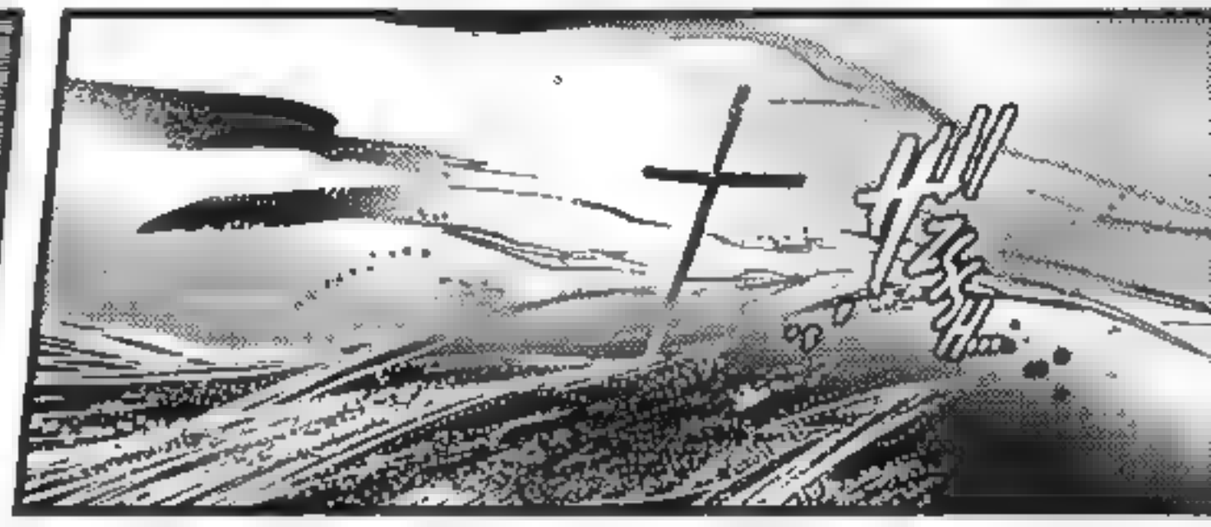
UGH, WHAT A STUBBORN MAN.

WHAP!

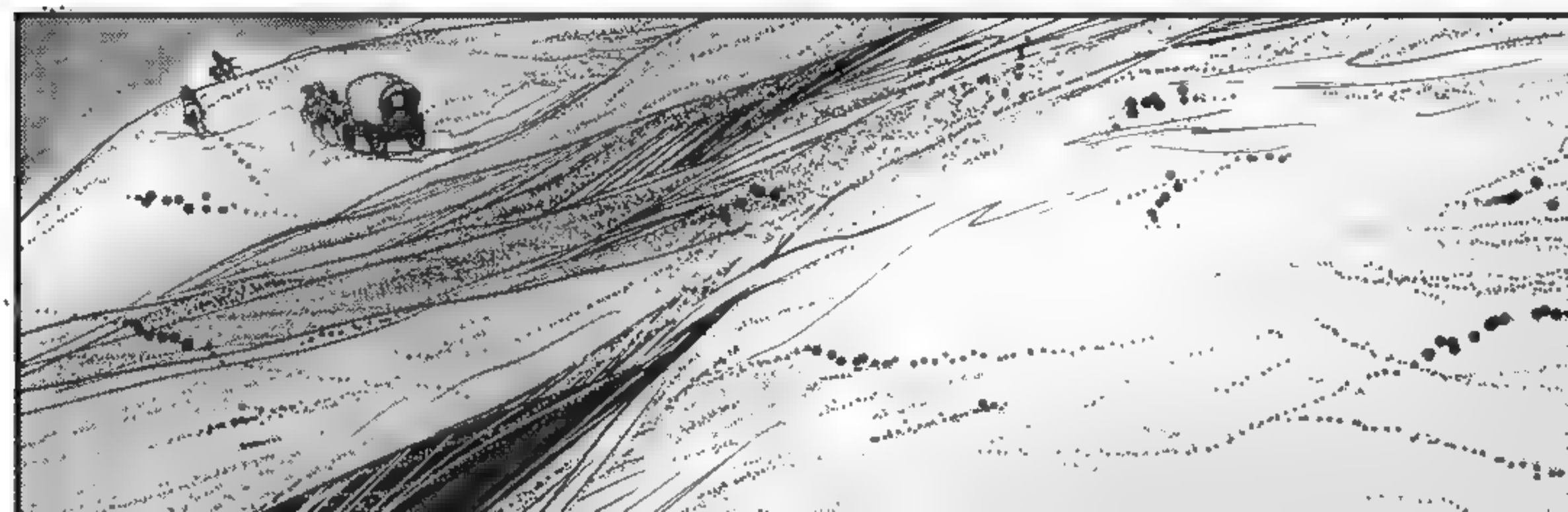
HMM ?



RATTLE
RATTLE



FWOOSH



RRRR

WAIT HERE.

THE TOWN IS ABOUT A DAY'S RIDE FROM HERE.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S INSIDE, BUT ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE GOING TO COME OUT SAFELY?

YOU'RE GOING IN THERE?

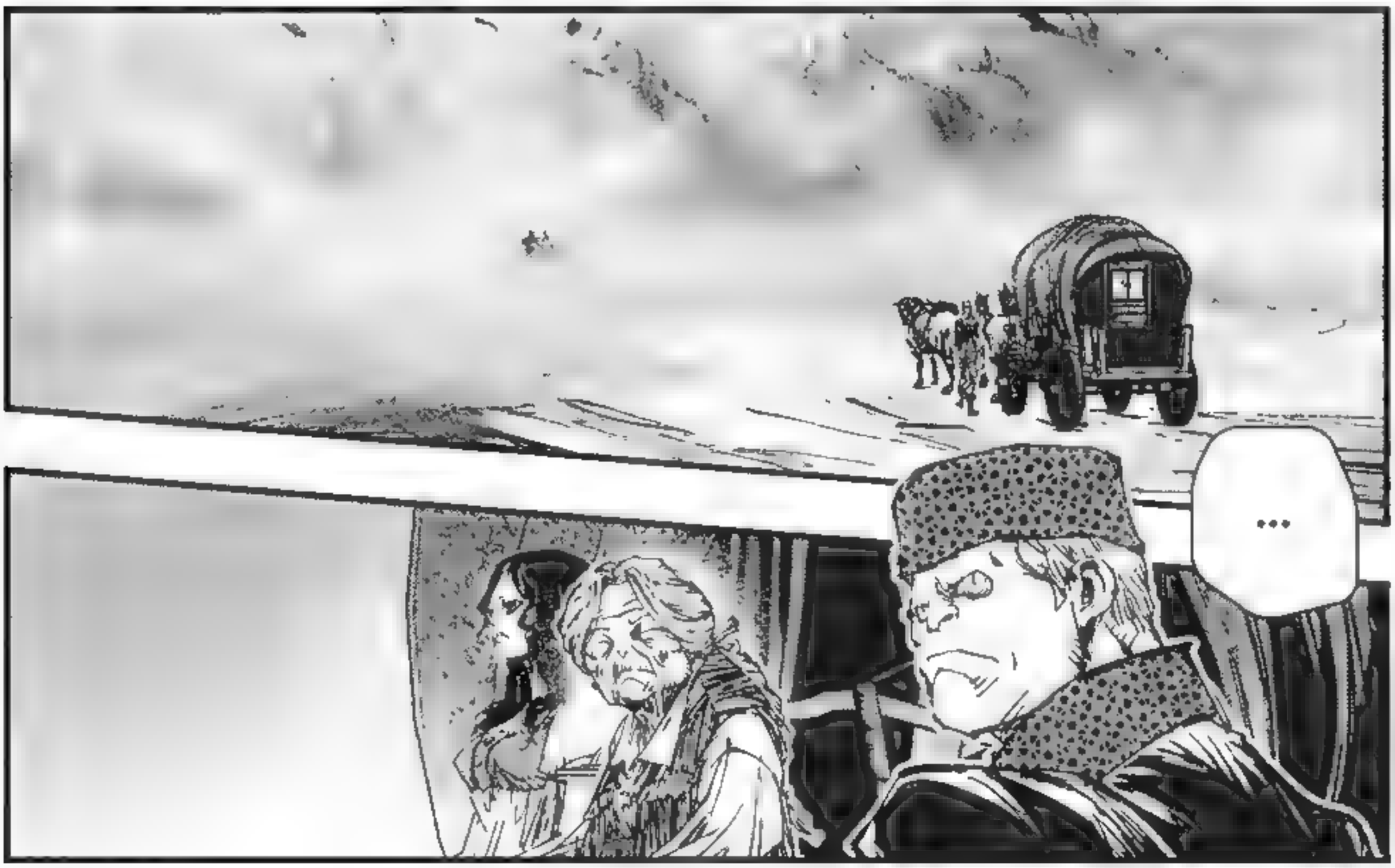
NOD

LET THESE TWO BE YOUR GUARDS.

ZSH
ZSH

IF I'M NOT BACK IN HALF A DAY'S TIME...
...USE YOUR SAND ARTS TO ERASE THE STORM.
ZSH
ZSH

ZSH


...

ROOAARRR...

ZSH...

IT'S THE DESERT, ISN'T IT?

THE ONE WHO ATTACKED US...

THAT'S RIGHT.

I UNDERSTAND YOU TWICE SAVED MY BROTHER'S LIFE.

I THANK YOU.

...

I SAW IT IN A DREAM.

HOW DID YOU KNOW?

I DREAMT... AND SAW WHAT THE DESERT DREAMS.

I DON'T WISH TO LOSE MY SANITY AT THIS AGE.

...I THINK I'LL EXCUSE MYSELF FROM VIEWING YOURS.

ONE'S TRUE INTENTIONS ARE ALWAYS REVEALED IN ONE'S DREAMS.

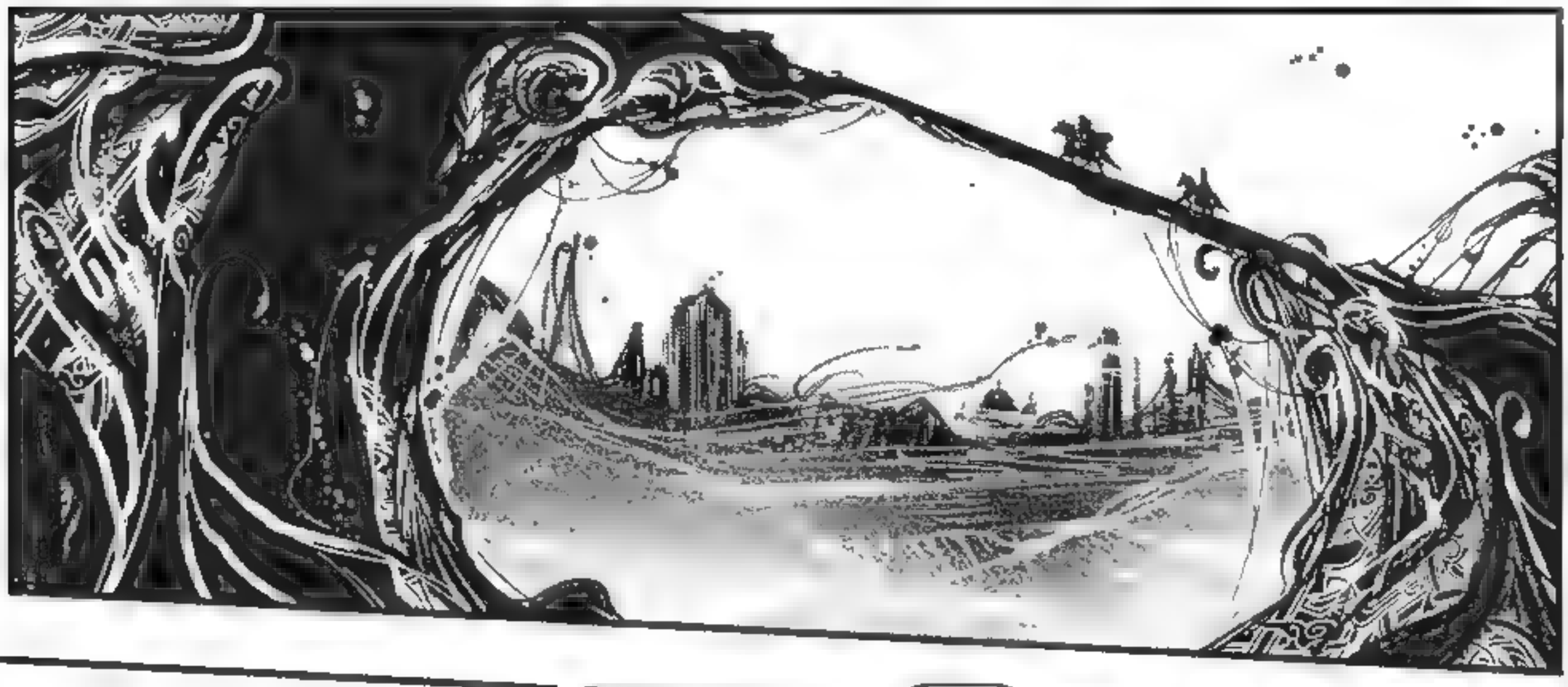
WHAT OF MY DREAMS, THEN?

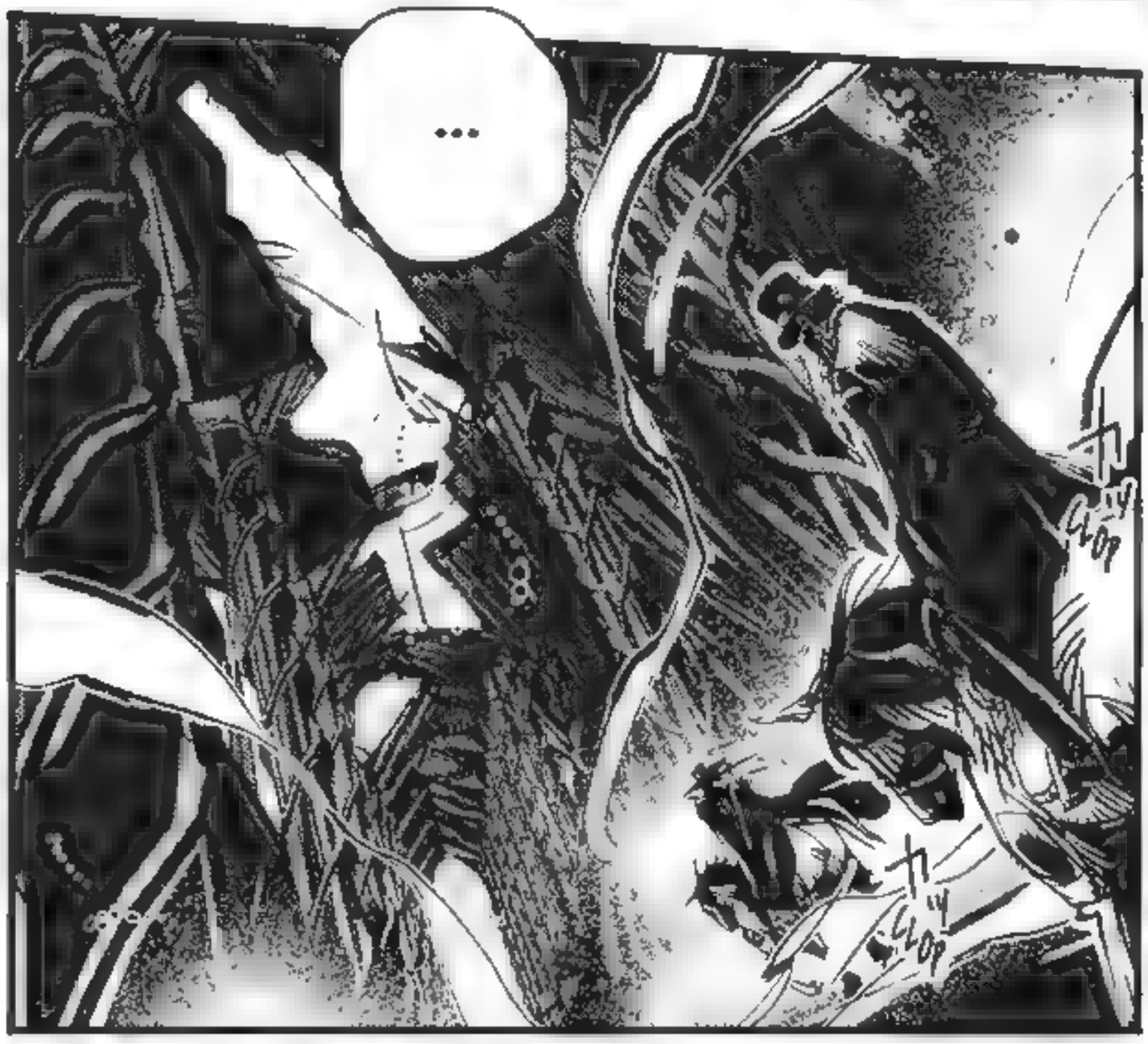
...

WHOOOSH...

CLOP... CLOP... CLOP

HUH





YOU SAID YOU SAW IT IN A DREAM.

IS THIS IT?

BA-BUMP

YES.

—SOME CRAZY IDEA ABOUT TRYING TO COMBINE HUMANS AND THE NOBILITY.

I SUPPOSE IT CAN'T BE FAULTED FOR WANTING TO BECOME SMARTER, GREATER, SOMETHING MORE.

EVEN AFTER THIS RESEARCH LAB FELL INTO RUIN, THE MACHINES CONTINUED TO RUN, AND PUMPED THEIR FINDINGS INTO THE DESERT.

RUMBLE

RUMBLE...

WHAT NOW?

Z-SH

...?

ZAK

ZAK

ZAK

FLARE

BOOOM

ZAK

IT'LL DO.

EARTH, WATER, FIRE, AIR...

IS IT ENOUGH ?

GWOOOSH!

WOOOOOOOOO...

CLOMP

CLOP

GOOOOOOO

むしゃ MUNCH MUNCH

-SO YOU'RE GOING TO DO IT?

#dCHK!

TO RISE TO GREATER HEIGHTS - IT WAS TOO ALLURING A PROSPECT.

I COULDN'T, EVEN THOUGH I WANTED TO.

WHY DID YOU NOT ENTER SLEEP OF YOUR OWN ACCORD?

IT'S THE REASON I ATTACKED YOU ALL IN THE FIRST PLACE. I KNEW YOU'D BE THE ONES TO PUT ME TO SLEEP.

LONG I'VE WAITED FOR THIS DAY...

FWAHH

TELL ME.

TELL ME - AM I THE ONLY ONE WHO IS THIS WAY?

EVEN KNOWING IT WILL INVOLVE INCREDIBLE STRUGGLE AND UNTOLD WEARINESS?

DOESN'T EVERYONE WISH TO BECOME SOMETHING OTHER THAN THEY ARE?

PLEASE TELL ME...

THAT'S IT?

HAAAAHHHH—

FLY
RAGE
SMACK
SMACK
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM

TOWN OF BARNABAS

WELL, GUESS THIS IS WHERE WE PART WAYS!

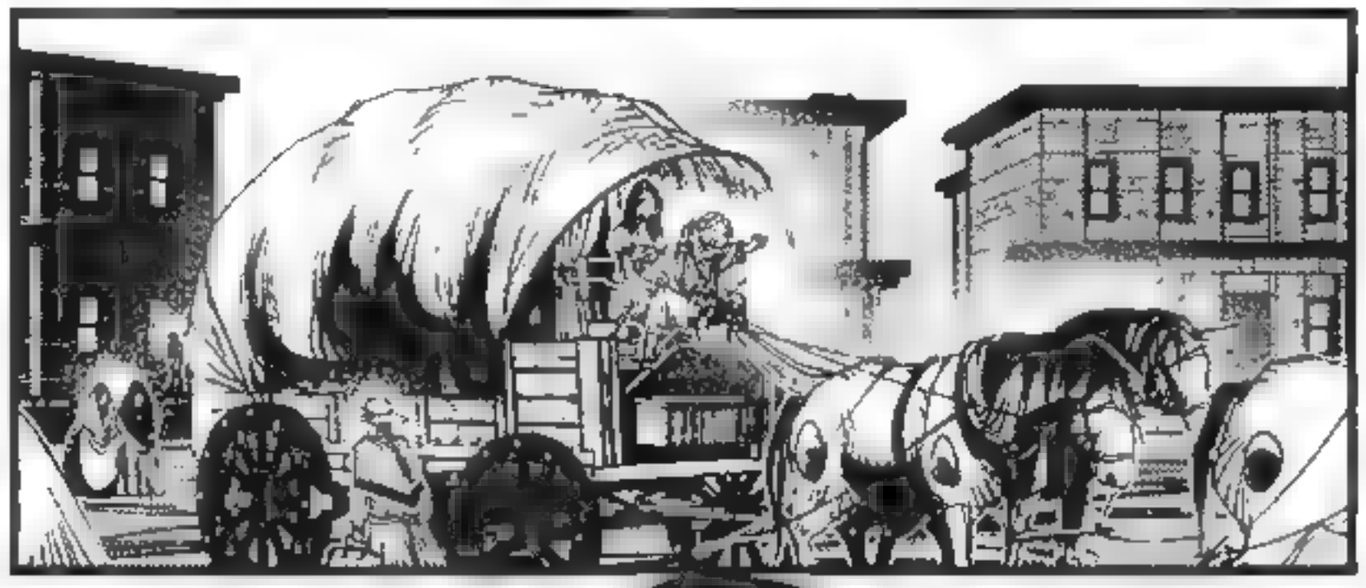
A MILLION THANKS! REALLY!

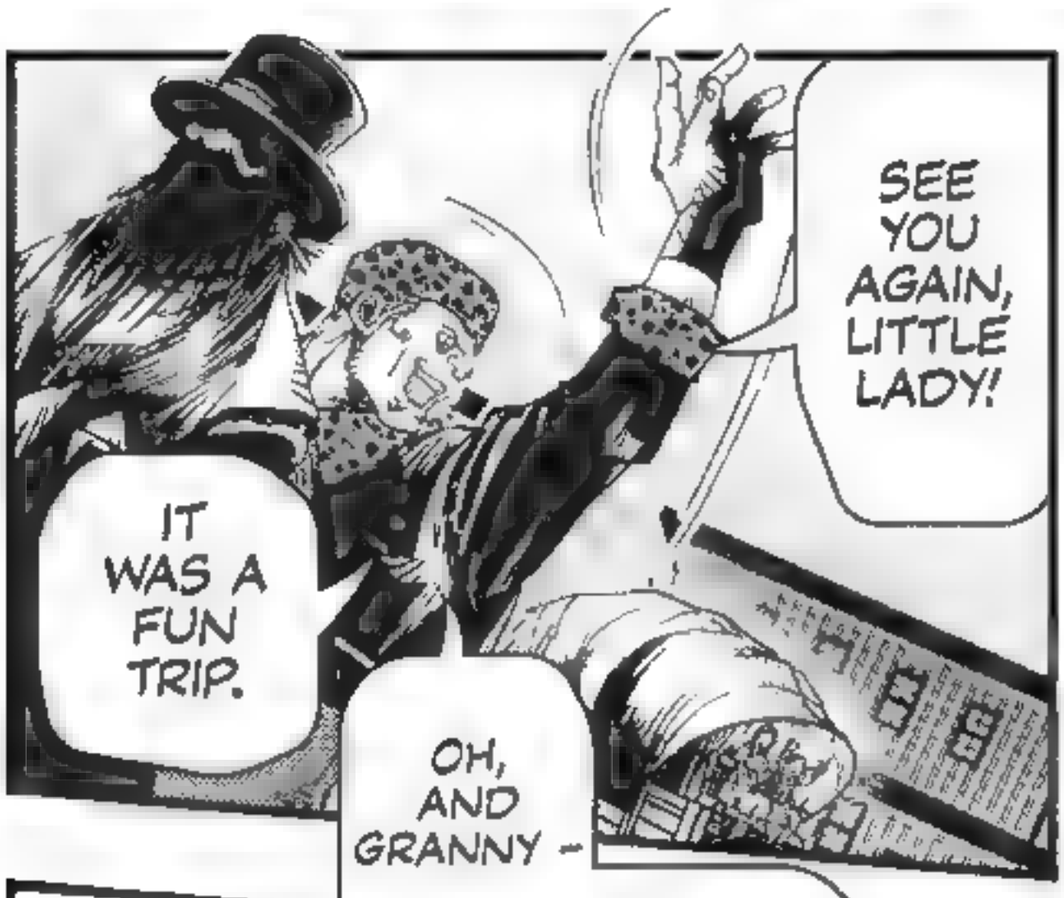
WE'D NEVER HAVE MADE IT HERE WITHOUT YOU GUYS!

HUH? LEAVING ALREADY?

I'M ABOUT TO SET OUT TO RETURN THIS GIRL BACK HOME, BUT -

OH?!
WOULDN'T YOU ALL LIKE TO HAVE A DRINK TOGETHER BEFORE THAT?




SEE YOU AGAIN, LITTLE LADY!
IT WAS A FUN TRIP.
OH, AND GRANNY -
I'LL BE SURE AND RETURN YOU THE FAVOR SOMEDAY FOR TELLING D TO COME SAVE MY ASS!
I WON'T BE HOLDING MY BREATH OR ANYTHING, BUT YEAH, OKAY!
RATTLE RATTLE

NOD

<2021>
THORNTON LAW OFFICES

I'VE GOT TO HAND IT TO THE GREAT VAMPIRE HUNTER D - YOU MANAGED TO CROSS THE DESERT WITHIN THE ALLOTTED TIME.

WELCOME. YOU'RE RIGHT ON TIME.

YOU SAID YOU HAD INFORMATION ON THE "PERSON OF GREAT INTEREST TO ME" - THAT IT WOULD BE MY *PAYMENT*.

LET'S HEAR IT.

SO HOW WAS YOUR TRIP?

YES, I AM ONE OF THEM.

YOU AREN'T GOING TO ASK HOW I MANAGED TO GET HERE BEFORE YOU?

THERE AREN'T MANY WHO CAN OPERATE A "FLYER" BUT...

WHERE IS HE?

WHERE DID YOU MEET WITH HIM?

YOU CAN ASK HIM YOUR-SELF.

IT'S OVERGROWN WITH WEEDS, BUT APPARENTLY HE CHOOSES HIS LODGINGS BASED ON ITS PAST EMINENCE RATHER THAN ITS LOOKS.

USED TO BELONG TO A NOBLE ONCE.

IN A RUN-DOWN MANSION ON THE SOUTH EDGE OF TOWN -

TAP TAP TAP...

HE SHOULD BE SLEEPING AT THIS HOUR.

CARE-
FUL -

HE'S
HERE.

I SENSE
HIS PRE-
SENCE.

THE CLAN

GOOD— YOU'VE COME.

YOUR TRIAL WAS MEANT TO BE THE CROSSING OF THE DESERT —

NOT COMBAT.

WHAT YOU WITNESSED WAS BUT ONE ENDING.

WHAT DID YOU SEE?

WHAT WERE YOUR THOUGHTS...

...CONCERNING YOUR OWN FUTURE?

THOK

THOK

SFX

WHSH

WHIP

DO YOU YET HAVE THE WILL REMAINING TO FACE THE CRUEL DAYS AHEAD OF YOU?

DO YOU NOT WISH FOR REST?

SFX

Slash!

SHRR...

VERY WELL.

SO THIS IS YOUR ANSWER.

SLASH!

IT IS BEFITTING FOR ONE WHO IS MY SOLE SPECIMEN OF SUCCESS.

IT'S JUST A RESIDUAL IMAGE FROM THE PAST.

IT'S NO USE.

STOP.

BUT SO LONG AS YOU EMBRACE THAT FATE, DEATH WILL EVER CAST ITS SHADOW OVER YOU.

WE'VE BEEN TRAPPED INSIDE A DREAM!
WHAT THE – ?
IF THE DREAMER AWAKENS, THE DREAM WILL DISAPPEAR – WITH US IN IT!
HURRY !

DAN'S OFF
OK
DAN'S OFF
HMM

BRAVO.

AT THE SALOON.

WHERE IS YOUR YOUNGER BROTHER ?

WHO PUT YOU UP TO THIS?

DON'T YOU KNOW ALREADY ?

...LET'S POST-PONE THIS FOR ANOTHER DAY.

I, THE DREAMER, AM ALSO BUT A DREAM.

IT'S NO USE.

SO WE'LL MEET HERE, AT 330M.

SUNRISE IS AT 400M.

TOMOR-ROW, EARLY MORNING.

CHOOSE THE TIME.

I'LL LEAVE THAT TO YOU.

WHY DO YOU NOT CUT ME DOWN HERE AND NOW?

RUSTLE

WHY DO YOU NOT CHOOSE A TIME DURING DAYLIGHT?

CHIRRUP

CHIRRUP

D.

RUSTLE

WHY COULDN'T YOU HAVE JUST DIED ON THE JOURNEY?

YOUR MOTHER AND FATHER WERE THE ONES WHO HIRED OUT FOR YOUR SEARCH - NOT US!

YOUR PRESENCE HERE IS ONLY GONNA GET OUR HOUSE BURNED DOWN!

YOU WHORE TO THE NOBILITY!

I...I WAS INTENDING TO PUT UP WITH IT, NO MATTER WHAT THEY SAID ABOUT ME.

REALLY, I DID...

BUT... WHEN THEY STARTED CALLING MY BABY A VAMPIRE, TOO -

COME TOMORROW, I'LL MANAGE ON MY OWN.

PLEASE... LET ME STAY HERE, JUST FOR TONIGHT.

DO AS YOU LIKE.

IT'S ALL THE SAME TO THEM.

THE CHILD IS A DHAMPIR.

WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO DO?

BUT THIS IS YOUR -

IT'S NOT FOR YOU.

RUSTLE

ZHOO

POUF

THANK YOU...

HUG!

PLOP

YOU SAY YOU'LL MANAGE ALONE.

ALTHOUGH THERE ARE EXCEP-TIONS...

...DHAMPIR CHILDREN ARE SAID TO BE QUITE CONSI-DERATE.

THERE WILL SOON BE TWO OF YOU.

...

YES.

TOUCH

I'LL... TRY TO BE BRAVE.

OH... I'M SO GLAD...

BA-BUM!

BA-BUM!

...

I CAN HEAR YOUR PULSE.

WHEN I WAS A CHILD, MY FATHER TOLD ME...

...THAT DHAMPIRS DON'T BREATHE.

AND THAT'S WHY THEY HAVE NO HEARTBEAT, EITHER.

AND I HONESTLY BELIEVED HIM.

I'M GLAD IT'S NOT TRUE.

NOW I KNOW - A DHAMPIR'S HEART BEATS JUST LIKE OURS!

YOUR BLOOD IS WARM, TOO.

I'M SO GLAD.

MY BABY IS GOING TO BE JUST LIKE YOU, ISN'T IT!

I'LL LOOK AFTER YOU TONIGHT.

HUH!! SST...

CUT

HUH?!

HOW COULD WE LEAVE THE GIRL ALONE ALL NIGHT WITH A PLAYBOY LIKE YOU?!

ARE YOU KIDDING ?

RUSTLE

HUH

THAT SHOULD DO IT.

GOOD.

OH, BUT FIRST, ARE YOU SURE SHE WON'T WAKE UP?

YOU KNOW, I'VE BEEN DOING SOME THINKING -

RATHER THAN BOTH OF THEM HAVING TO LEAD AN EXISTENCE OF STRIFE, I THINK IT'D BE BETTER IF AT LEAST ONE OF THEM WERE ABLE TO LIVE A NORMAL LIFE.

YOU KNOW WHAT HAS TO BE DONE, RIGHT?

GRIP

AND I'M GONNA DO IT!

TREMBLE

I CAN ISOLATE MY SAND ARTS TO AFFECT ONLY THE INSIDE OF A PERSON, TOO.

TREMBLE

STAY YOUR HAND.

FLINCH!

L... LOOK AT YOU - JUST LOOK AT YOU!

JUST LOOK AT YOUR FACE RIGHT NOW!

NO MATTER HOW HANDSOME, OR WHAT SUPERHUMAN POWERS HE'S BORN WITH, IT'S THAT EXPRESSION THAT WILL WIN OUT IN THE END!

TAE'S CHILD WILL BE LIKE THAT, TOO.

—THAT FACE OF A NOBLE?!

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU WORN THAT FACE, EH?

LOWER YOUR HAND.

AND EVERY TIME IT HAPPENS, EVERYTHING HE'S BUILT UP UNTIL THEN WILL BE TORN RIGHT DOWN AGAIN!

BUT EVERY TIME IT HAPPENS!

NOT JUST ONCE -

YOU MAY BE A DHAMPIR, BUT YOU'RE STILL A MAN!

NO, I WON'T!

YOU'D NEVER UNDER-STAND HOW A WOMAN FEELS!

S...

YOU'RE A DHAMPIR, AREN'T YOU?

WHAT...? I -

W-... WH-...

LIES... HOW DARE YOU ACCUSE ME OF SUCH A - ...

BUT LANCE AND TAE WERE TRANS-PORTED AS THEY SLEPT.

IN THE DESERT, CLAY CAME TO ESCORT ME... AND YOU.

TH-THAT'S JUST A COINCI-DENCE ...

...

DID ITS SHAPE MAKE YOU UN-COMFORT-ABLE?

AND THAT GRAVE MARKER I MADE - BEYOND THE INITIAL GLANCE YOU GAVE, YOU WOULD NOT LOOK AT IT AGAIN.

FWSH!

STOP IT!

...WHICH CAN ONLY COME FROM BEING ONE YOURSELF.

IT'S YOUR OVERWHELMING BITTERNESS TOWARDS DHAMPIRS ...

I HAVE EVIDENCE, IT'S NOT MERELY AN ACCUSATION.

...

TP BLAM!

I'M ON IT!

DASHLEY!

THUD

CLAY!

THE ONLY REASON SHE'S STILL EVEN BREATHING IS BECAUSE SHE'S A DHAMPIR...

RIGHT THROUGH THE HEART.

UUGH...

D-

DON'T YOU TELL ME WHAT TO DO!

DON'T SPEAK.

I DON'T KNOW WHO DID THIS, OR WHY... BUT THIS IS THE END FOR ME.

IT'S ALL RIGHT - JUST LEAVE ME BE.

DON'T WAKE THE GIRL OVER THIS, EITHER!

HEY... WILL YOU HOLD MY HAND?

I WANT TO GO NICE AND CALM.

OH HURRY UP, WOULD YOU?!

CLASP!

I'D BENT OVER BACKWARDS TO RAISE HIM RIGHT...

ONE DAY, HE RAN AWAY.

...BUT IN THE END, HE TOOK OFF, SAYING, "IF I'M A DHAMPIR, I'LL LIVE LIKE A DHAMPIR!"

HIS MOTHER WAS A DHAMPIR, SO OF COURSE HE WAS ONE, TOO.

HA HA...

...I ONCE HAD A KID, YOU KNOW.

TONIGHT MAY BE THE LAST NIGHT FOR IT, THOUGH.

-JUST LOOK AT HER PEACE-FUL FACE.

Y'SEE, ON THE EVE BEFORE HIS WEDDING ...

I CAN'T BLAME HIM, THOUGH.

I REMEM-BER HE WAS CRYING TEARS OF BLOOD ...

...HE HADN'T BEEN ABLE TO STOP HIMSELF FROM SINKING HIS FANGS INTO THE NECK OF THE WOMAN HE LOVED AND WAS GOING TO BE WITH.

...WHO SLEPT WITH SUCH A TROUBLED, GRUMPY LOOK ON HER FACE AS I DID.

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN TOLD BY OTHERS THAT THEY'VE NEVER SEEN ANYONE...

SLIP...

I THINK I CAN FINALLY BE AT EASE NOW.

...WELL... LOOKS LIKE THIS IS GOODBYE...

I WON'T ASK YOU TO SAY YOU LOVE ME OR ANYTHING ...

I FORGOT TO ASK YOU FOR ONE LAST WORD.

...BUT SAY SOME-THING TO ME, WILL YOU?

OH! ONE MORE THING -

REALLY? I SEE!

OH, I'M SO GLAD...

IF YOU SAY SO, THEN IT MUST BE FOR SURE!

HO! HA, HA, HA, HO...

THAT GIRL'S CHILD... WILL NOT RUN OFF.

WHAT SHALL WE DO ABOUT OUR SCHEDULED DUEL TOMORROW ?

POSTPONE IT TO NOON.

RUSTLE

...DID SHE KICK THE BUCKET?

SORRY, MAN - HE GOT AWAY.

WE CAN RESCHED-ULE TO THE SAME HOUR, JUST ON A DIFFERENT DAY.

WE'LL HAVE TO HOLD A FUNERAL.

TELL HIM I'LL COME SEE HIM A BIT PAST NOON.

?

WOULD YOUR MASTER REALLY APPROVE OF THAT?

ZZZ...

CLATTER
RATTLE
RATTLE
CLOP
CLIP
CLOP
CLIP
CLIP
GLARE!
...-'S SISTER.
HER BROTHER AND HIS WIFE LEFT TOWN EARLY THIS MORNING ...
WHISPER
WHISPER
SISTER? BUT I THOUGHT SHE WAS DEAD?
APPARENTLY, SHE WAS ONE OF THE HIDDEN...
WHISPER
WHISPER
CLOP
CLIP

...IT'S PERFECT TIMING!

STATISTICS SAY A DHAMPIR'S COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS IS LOWERED FORTY PERCENT WHEN BATTLING IN BROAD DAYLIGHT.

...

THE TIME THAT WAS NECESSARY TO REPORT THE OLD WOMAN'S DEATH, THE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION, THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE HEARSE...

NO BETTER TIME FOR THE DEAD TO START THEIR TRIP THAN WHEN THE SUN IS HIGH ABOVE IN THE SKY -

DON'T YOU THINK?

KILL HIM TODAY FOR SURE.

THIS WOULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED IF YOU TWO HAD TAKEN CARE OF HIM BACK IN THE DESERT!

DON'T LOOK SO DIS-PLEASED.

NEITHER WILL I.

UNTIL THAT HUNTER IS DEAD, YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE PAYMENT.

RATTLE

RATTLE

CLATTER

RATTLE
RATTLE
CLOP
CLOP

THERE'S SOME OPEN SPACE UP AHEAD.

NOW, THEN -

IT'S STRANGE ...

LET'S SETTLE THINGS THERE.

...

...BUT NOW, TO BE HONEST, I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT YOU AT ALL.

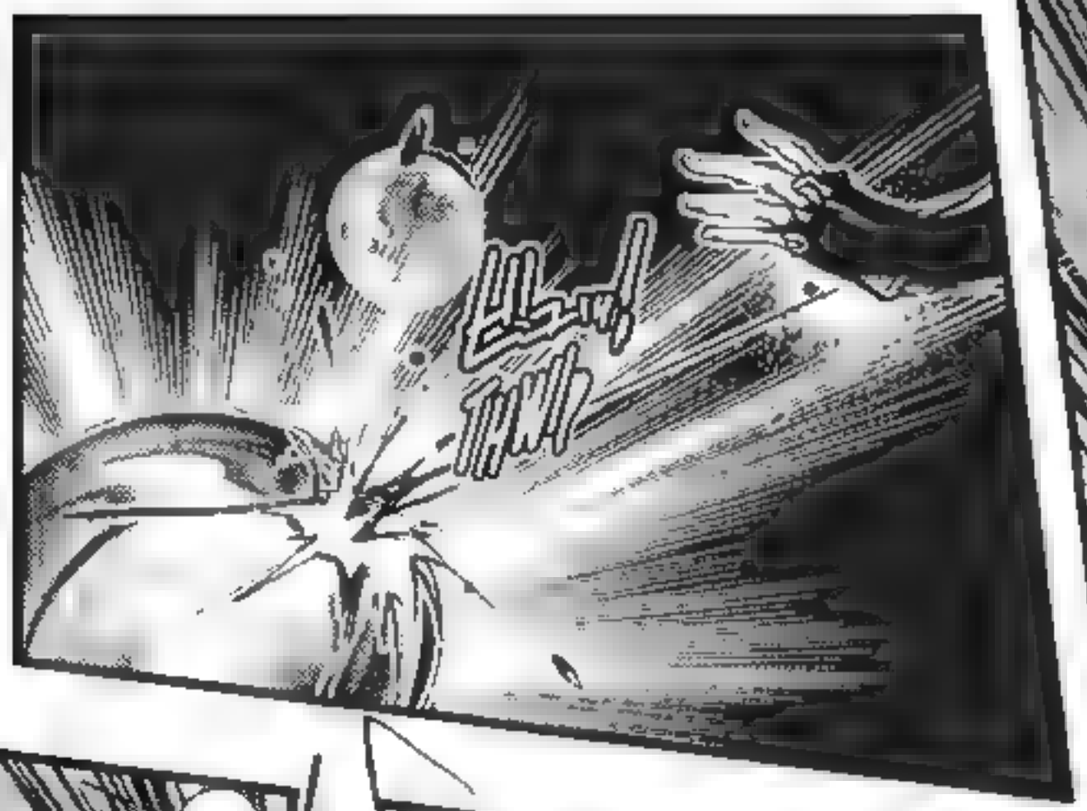
WE'D MEANT TO FINISH YOU OFF THAT FIRST NIGHT WE MET...

WHASH!

I THANK YOU.

IT'S NO-THING.

DASH!



DODODOD

FWSH!!

NOT GOOD!

JAJANG

!

BRO!

ZWOOSH!

GAH!

HHH

FSHHH...

?!

THUNK!

HIS CAPE ?!

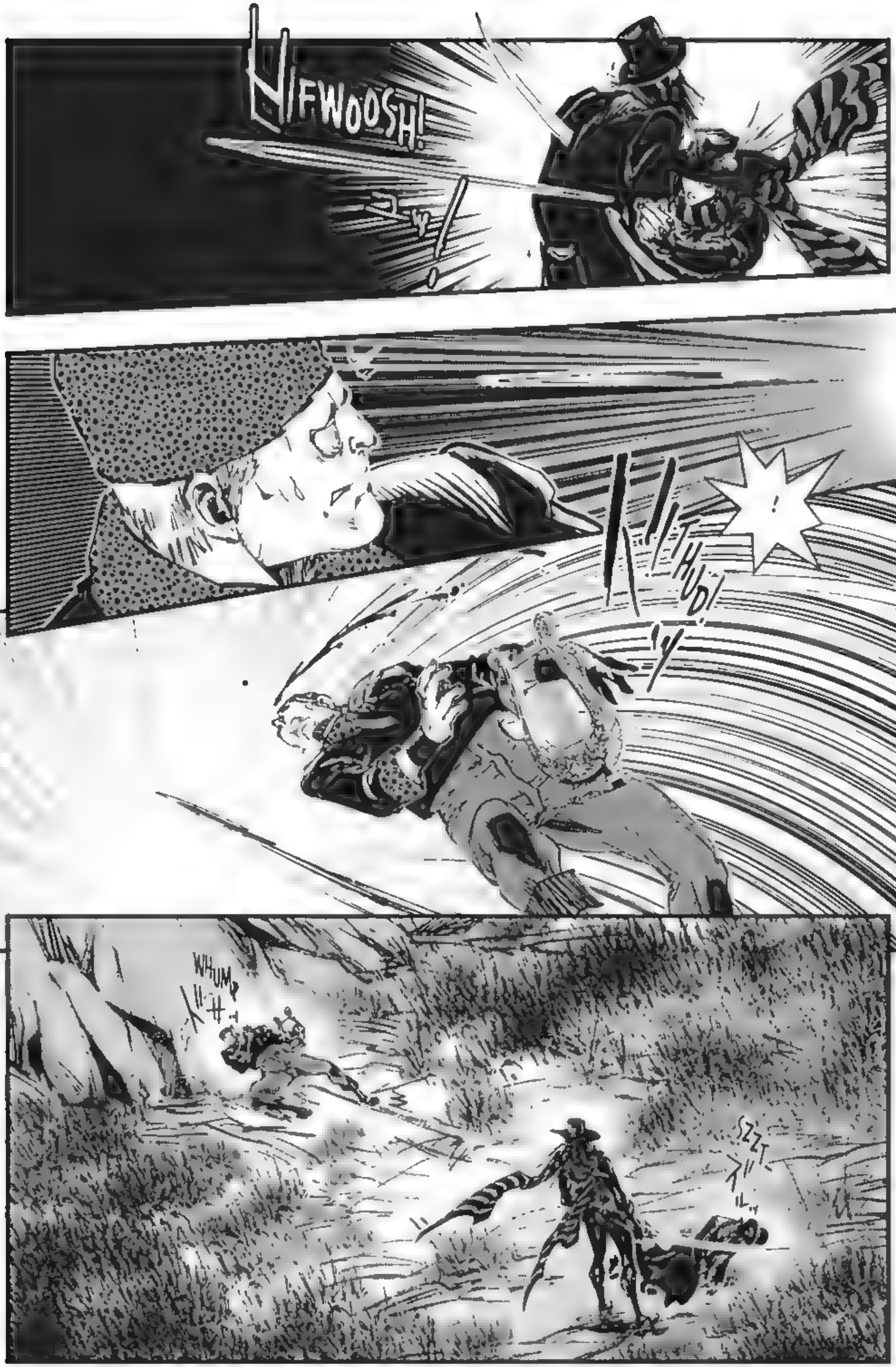
I'VE GOT TO -

FROM THIS ANGLE... BRO'S IN THE WAY...

DASH!

SHIT!

SUCH INCRED-IBLE SPEED...!


FWOOSH!
THUD!
WHUMP
SZZT

UGH ...

...GG... HH!

THERE'S ... STILL -...

TICK

WHOOSH!

THE ONE WHO HIRED US... IS THORNTON.

GOOD... OH, AND BY THE WAY...

MORE THAN ENOUGH.

...SO...

...HAVE I RETURNED THE FAVOR NOW...?

PROBABLY THE ONE WHO GOT GRANNY, TOO...

THAT GUY I WASTED JUST NOW...IS ANOTHER ASSASSIN OF HIS.

I UNDER-STAND.

JAK

!

QUIVER...

?!

LET'S FINISH THIS...

...THEN...

FLIT

THUD

LUCK JUST ISN'T ON MY SIDE...

YES.

ARE YOU SCARED ?

...

I'LL LEAVE THAT DECISION UP TO HIM OR HER.

DON'T LET THE CHILD BECOME A HUNTER.

IT'S TIME FOR YOUR CARRIAGE TO LEAVE.

BUT I'M AFRAID THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO TO REPAY YOU...

YOU'VE GIVEN ME MONEY, AND EVEN BOUGHT MY TICKET FOR THE CARRIAGE ...

EVEN IF HE DOESN'T BECOME A HUNTER, I'LL RAISE HIM TO BE JUST LIKE THE VAMPIRE HUNTER I'VE KNOWN.

BUT -

YES - I PROMISE.

I TRUST I'LL ONE DAY BE ABLE TO HEAR RUMORS THAT YOU ARE DOING WELL?

I THINK I'LL BE ABLE TO MAKE IT SOMEHOW BY DOING THIS.

AND I OWE IT ALL TO GRANNY.

IN MY LIFE, I'VE CONSTANTLY RECEIVED HELP AND KINDNESS FROM PEOPLE LIKE HER, FROM PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT EVEN BLOOD-RELATED.

FLAP!

I MADE THIS USING THE SEWING MACHINE.

YOU, TOO.

FARE WELL.

I STILL HAVE SOME BUSINESS IN TOWN.

!

JAK

SMILE

!

. . . .

NOW, THEN – IT'S TIME.

HIDEYUKI KIKUCHI'S VAMPIRE HUNTER D VOL. 6 - END

Vampire Hunter D returns...

...to grant a dying wish...

...by protecting a one-of-a-kind gem...

...and his life!

HIDEYUKI KIKUCHI'S

Vampire Hunter D

7

coming 2012

AFTERWORD 6

I'VE DEVELOPED "40S SHOULDER"

THIS SECTION CONTAINS INFO THAT I RESEARCHED MYSELF, SO THERE MAY BE INACCURACIES, AS WELL AS DIFFERENCES FROM OTHERS' EXPERIENCES. PLEASE NOTE THAT THE INFORMATION HEREIN IS BASED PURELY ON MY OWN PERSONAL ANECDOTE.

NAME SOUNDS KINDA COOL

"40S SHOULDER" (ALSO "50S SHOULDER") = ADHESIVE CAPSULITIS OF SHOULDER

OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "FROZEN SHOULDER"

ADHESIVE CAPSULITIS IS THE TERM FOR SHOULDER PAIN DUE TO SUCH GENERAL CAUSES AS DETERIORATION OF THE MUSCLE FROM AGE OR LACK/EXCESS OF EXERCISE. APPARENTLY, PEOPLE IN THEIR 40S~50S ARE MOST PRONE, BUT THERE ARE ALSO THOSE WHO GET IT EARLIER IN THEIR 30S, AS WELL AS SOME WHO GET IT LATER IN THEIR 80S. IT REALLY, REALLY HURTS (A TOTALLY DIFFERENT KIND OF PAIN THAN, SAY, A PLAIN OLD STIFF SHOULDER). ALSO, RANGE OF ARM MOVEMENT IS GREATLY REDUCED.

COMMON SYMPTOMS

OTHER INCONVENIENCES INCLUDE* BEING UNABLE TO REMOVE YOUR OWN T-SHIRT, BEING UNABLE TO PUT YOUR HAND ON YOUR HIP AND - IF IT'S REALLY BAD - BEING UNABLE TO WIPE YOUR OWN BEHIND AFTER GOING TO THE BATHROOM, ETC., ETC.

BEING UNABLE TO TOUCH YOUR LEFT SHOULDER WITH YOUR RIGHT HAND STUFF LIKE THAT -

ONE CAUSE IS SAID TO BE AN IMBALANCE OF THE MUSCLES (THE INNER MUSCLES IN PARTICULAR). WHEN THERE'S PAIN IN ONE AREA, ANOTHER AREA STRAINS ITSELF COMPENSATING TO MINIMIZE MOVEMENT IN THE PAINFUL AREA, THEREBY CAUSING A CHAIN OF MUSCLE IMBALANCES... IN MY CASE, I ALSO INJURED MY UPPER ARM AND ELBOW.

↑IT'S A BAND THAT STABILIZES THE ARM MUSCLE

RESTING THE ARM IS BEST, BUT SINCE THAT IS NOT AN OPTION

MAIN MUSCLES USED IN ARM MOVEMENT

WHEN THE PAIN IS ON THIS SIDE OF THE ARM, IT'S CALLED "TENNIS ELBOW".

WHEN ON THIS SIDE, IT'S CALLED "GOLF ELBOW".

EXTENSOR DIGITORUM
EXTENSOR CARPI RADIALIS LONGUS
EXTENSOR DIGITI MINIMI
EXTENSOR CARPI RADIALIS BREVIS
EXTENSOR CARPI ULNARIS
BRACHIORADIALIS
FLEXOR CARPI ULNARIS
BICEPS BRACHII
ANCONEUS
BRACHIALIS
DELTOID
TRICEPS TENDON
TRAPEZIUS
TRICEPS LATERAL HEAD
TRICEPS MEDIAL HEAD
TRICEPS LONG HEAD
TERES MINOR
INFRASPINATUS
SCAPULA
TERES MAJOR
SEPRATUS ANTERIOR
LATISSIMUS DORSI

AS A PRELUDE TO THE PAIN IN MY SHOULDER, I STARTED EXPERIENCING PAIN HERE FIRST, IN MY UPPER RIB AREA (SERRATUS ANTERIOR MUSCLE)

WHEN THE INFLAMMATION IS REALLY BAD, THE ENTIRE SHOULDER (THE AREA OF THE SCAPULA, THE CLAVICLE, ETC.) BECOMES AFFECTED. PAIN DISCOURAGES MUSCLE MOVEMENT → REDUCED USE, CAUSES MUSCLES TO STIFFEN → MOVEMENT RADIUS BECOMES RESTRICTED → PAIN INCREASES. A WORSENING SPIRAL...

THIS AREA IS WHERE IT HURTS

MODELED BY D (LOL).

SACS OF LUBRICATING FLUID ARE LOCATED IN PLACES LIKE THIS.

CLAVICLE
SCAPULA
HUMERUS

RAISING OF THE ARM IS PREVENTED BY THE TIP OF THE HUMERUS CONTACTING THE SCAPULA

INNER MUSCLES (RIGHT SCAPULA AREA) REAR VIEW

SUPRASPINATUS
DELTOID
SCAPULA
INFRASPINATUS
HUMERUS
TERES MINOR
TERES MAJOR
SUBSCAPULARIS MUSCLE (REAR VIEW)

▲ THERE ARE THIS MANY CONNECTING MUSCLES JUST FROM THE SCAPULA TO THE HUMERUS. PAIN OCCURS WHEN BONE, CARTILAGE, JOINTS, OR CONNECTIVE TISSUE IN THIS AREA BECOMES INFLAMED AND STIFF.

◀ WITH THE HARDENING OF THE SAC CONTAINING THE FLUID WHICH LUBRICATES THE JOINTS, SHOULDER MOVEMENT BECOMES RESTRICTED.

I GUESS THE INNER MUSCLES REALLY ARE IMPORTANT

...ANYWAY, I CAN BABBLE ALL I WANT, BUT THE POINT IS –

IT REALLY HURTS.

IF I HAD ONLY A FEW WORDS TO DESCRIBE WHAT MY ARM FEELS LIKE I'D SAY...

IT'S LIKE IT'S BEING TORN OFF!

GRIPE

SERIOUSLY, THERE'S PAIN WHEN I'M NOT DOING ANYTHING, JUST FROM THE WEIGHT OF THE ARM HANGING DOWN. THERE'S PAIN WHEN I'M SLEEPING – OR RATHER, TRYING TO SLEEP, EXCEPT I CAN'T BECAUSE OF THE PAIN. SOMETIMES THE PAIN IS EVEN WORSE AT BEDTIME, AND NOT BEING ABLE TO GET ADEQUATE REST IS A PSYCHOLOGICAL AS WELL AS PHYSICAL DRAIN. AN UNCONSCIOUS TWIST OF MY ARM WILL OFTEN RESULT IN PAIN SHARP ENOUGH TO TAKE MY BREATH AWAY, CAUSING ME TO WRITHE IN SILENT AGONY. BUT NO MATTER HOW BAD IT IS, THERE IS NO SPECIFIC REMEDY. ALL THAT CAN BE DONE IS TO USE VARIOUS PAINKILLERS AND COMPRESSES TO SUPPRESS INFLAMMATION, AND TAKE INJECTIONS OF HYALURONAN INTO THE SHOULDER JOINT. HOWEVER, THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THIS TREATMENT VARIES FROM PERSON TO PERSON...

GRIPE

GRUMBLE GRUMBLE...

FOUR TIMES I WAS GIVEN A SHOT, BUT IT WASN'T VERY EFFECTIVE...

APPARENTLY, IT IS TRUE THAT, IN MANY CASES, THE SHOULDER SIMPLY LEFT ALONE HEALS OVER TIME. HOWEVER, THERE IS THE POSSIBILITY THAT, IF THE CONDITION PERSISTS LONG ENOUGH, THE SHOULDER WILL BECOME PERMANENTLY "FROZEN" WITHIN ITS LIMITED RANGE OF MOVEMENT. THE PAIN PROGRESSION GOES SOMETHING LIKE THIS ↓

DIFFERS FROM PERSON TO PERSON

ACUTE PHASE

(INTENSE PAIN. SEVERE INFLAMMATION, SO KEEP SHOULDER AS RESTED AS POSSIBLE.)

CHRONIC PHASE

(SOME PAIN WITH MOVEMENT, BUT BEARABLE. REHAB COMMENCES.)

RIGHT NOW I'M EIGHT MONTHS IN, SO I'M AROUND HERE, I GUESS?

RECOVERY PHASE

(PAIN IS MOSTLY GONE, BUT WITHOUT STRINGENT REHAB, RANGE OF MOVEMENT WILL DETERIORATE.)

I TRIED TALKING TO MY FATHER,

YOU'LL DEFINITELY GET BETTER, SO DON'T WORRY!

YEE-HAW!

WHO ALSO ONCE SUFFERED FROM THIS...

AT NEARLY 70 YEARS OLD, HE FRACTURED HIS SPINE FROM A FALL WHILE DOING SOME WEEKEND CARPENTRY. YET MY MACHO DAD MANAGED A COMPLETE RECOVERY IN THREE MONTHS.

AND SO, I'M CURRENTLY UNDERGOING REHAB...

AT THE HOSPITAL, WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF A PHYSICAL THERAPIST...

SHOULDER ROTATIONS~ RESISTANCE EXERCISES~

DOES IT HURT?

UH, NO, I'M FINE...

KRAK KRAK

...OW.

TENDONS CRACKLING... WAY...

EACH DAY, I PERFORM THESE EXERCISES I CAN DO AT HOME.

RELAX MUSCLE AND ALLOW JOINT TO STRETCH

DANGLE DANGLE

FORWARD/BACK, SIDE TO SIDE, AS WELL AS CIRCULAR

DUMBBELL EXERCISES

NO TWISTING OF THE WRIST!

ROD-LIFTING EXERCISES

LEAN FORWARD A BIT, HAND ON TABLE FOR SUPPORT...

ALSO WHILE LYING DOWN

USING RUBBER EXERCISE BANDS...

ひっぱる!

FLEX SHOULDER BLADES

APPARENTLY, SHOULDER BLADE EXERCISES ARE ALSO GOOD FOR WEIGHT LOSS!

SO ANYWAY, THAT'S THE STORY...
AND AS FOR THE INEVITABLE WORK DELAY IT CAUSED -

I'M SO SORRY.

UH...THERE'S REALLY NO PARTICULAR PUNCHLINE/ENDING TO ANY OF THIS...SORRY ABOUT THAT.

TO ALL THE READERS WHO PURCHASED THIS BOOK -
TO KIKUCHI SENSEI -
TO EVERYONE ON THE EDITORIAL STAFF,
THANK YOU ALL VERY MUCH!

MEOW -

HANG IN THERE, NIPPON!

MEOW -

ARGH, I WANT TO HURRY UP AND BE HEALTHY AGAIN~... ALSO, THE EFFECTS OF THE STRONG YEN ARE STARTING TO HURT RIGHT ABOUT NOW...

STOP

This is the back of the book! Start from the other side.

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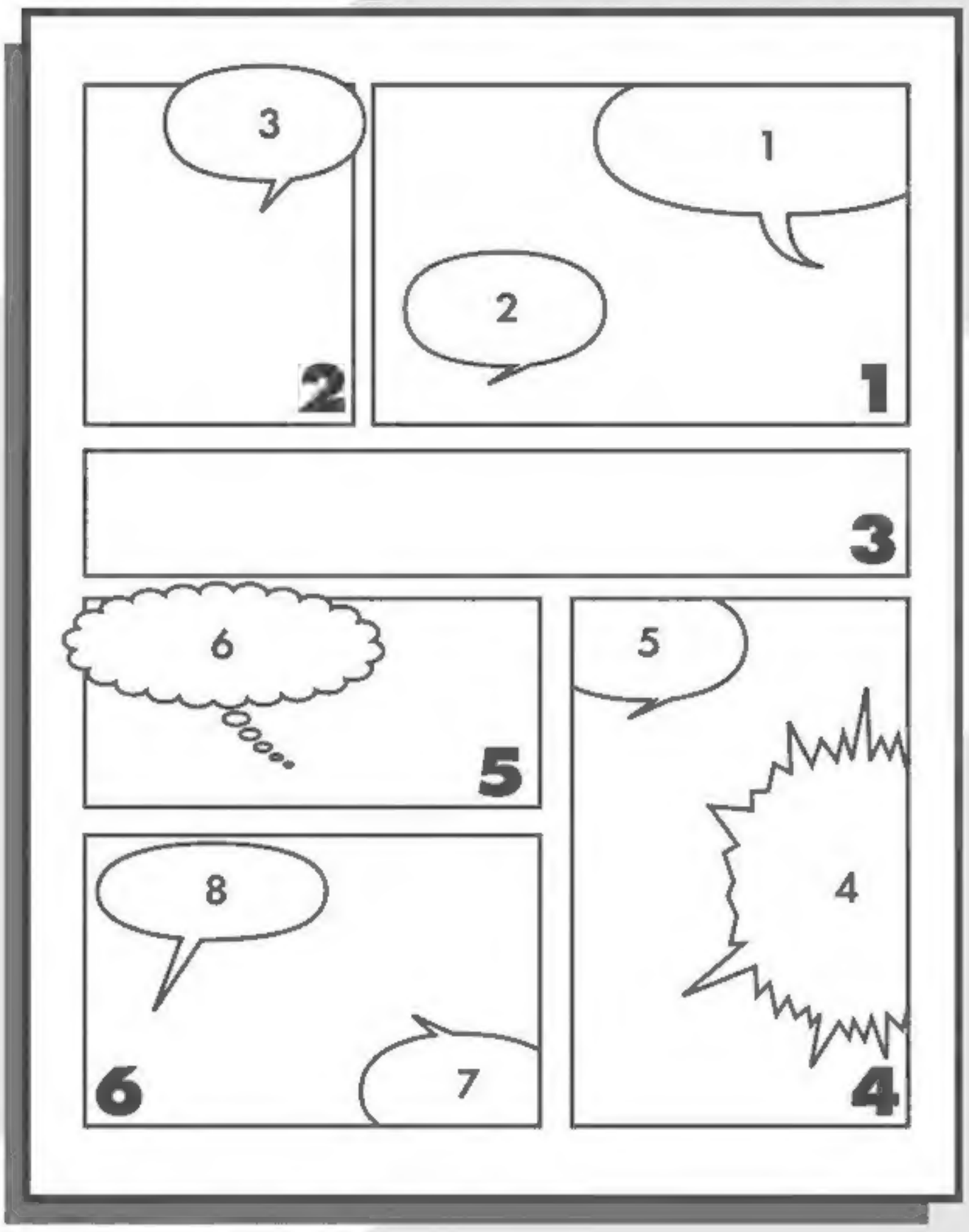

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Follow the diagram to see how its done.

Surf's Up!

HIDEYUKI KIKUCHI'S

Vampire Hunter D

6

A race across treacherous terrain...

A vital piece of information regarding a "person of great interest" to D sends him galloping across a dangerous desert. He is tailed by Granny Viper, the people finder, who needs to cross the desert herself to bring home one of the Hidden, someone once imprisoned by a Noble.

Doubtful that they can make it through the journey alive, Granny ingratiates themselves to D, hoping that the vampire hunter would protect them from the perils of the land when the time comes. Which is just as well, since "the desert of no return," as the name implies, is no ordinary desert. In fact, no one has ever come out of it alive!

Along the way, D gets on the wrong side of the Bullow Brothers, two of the roughest, toughest hunters there are and they are looking for some payback.

It's D out on the wild frontier, complete with covered wagon and guns a-blazin'. Or rather, sword a-slashin'.

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